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THE
LAND OF DREAMS,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
HENRY SYLVESTER ✓
" CORNWELL.

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NEW LONDON, CONN.
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES ALLYN.
1878.

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1878.

POWER PRESS OF
GEORGE EDGAR STARR,
1878.

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THE LAND OF DREAMS.

HERE is a Land no mortal chart hath noted,
Lying remote, a sunset Land of Ease,—
Whereto the voyager is softly floated
Across Lethean seas.

It is a region over whose existence
The shades of doubt and disbelief are cast ;
A Realm that lies, obscured by night and distance,
Vague, visionary, vast ;

Whereof I haste to bring, O friends and strangers !
Some brief account ; for I am travel worn ;
But lately reaching, after many dangers,
The margins of the morn.

The mountains lift their summits, dim and hoary,
In melancholy grandeur, far away ;
And all things wear a pale and languid glory,
Unknown to brazen day.

There ancient Night, her starry rule sustaining,
Sways her mild sceptre over sea and land ;
Amid her loyal court serenely reigning,
With Peace at her right hand ;

And Sleep, her slave, dusky and huge as Dagon,
Before her, prone and powerless as the dead,
One arm still round his purple-stained flagon,
And one beneath his head.

There all strange beauties that rapt Fancy renders,
Enchant the sense: from cliffs that nod around,
White cataracts, moonstruck with golden splendors,
Drop down without a sound;

Still meadows, where nocturnal blooms are growing,
Languid with love, lie lapt in slumbrous calm,
Wooed by enamored winds so faintly blowing
From groves of drooping palm.

By winding creek and sedgy-margined river,
The heavy-headed poppies doze, and doze;
Narcotic sweetness fills the air forever,
And all things love repose.

And round the land a mighty wall arises,
Upon whose gates eternal starlight gleams,
Showing a legend with antique devices
Inwrought: THE LAND OF DREAMS.

And by the portals wait a motley legion,
Who lead you onward through delightful bowers
Into the fair recesses of the region,
To beds of lotus flowers.

Then music rises, silver-cadenced, hoïy,
What time on elfin instruments they play
Some low and Lydian melody, that slowly
Steals Sorrow's soul away!

Or else you skim lone lakes in wizard barges,
By slow and measured motion borne along,
And hear at intervals, blown from the marges,
The Fairies' choral song.

There all night long, upon the purple highlands,
The drowsy sentinels of ghostly towers
Call to each other, in the starry silence,
The measure of the hours.

But by no swing of rhyme may I endeavor
The music of those mellow bells to show,
Which to those sleepy-sounding voices ever
Did chime responses low ;

Most like that delicate and airy ringing,
Of which the bulbul-hearted Hafiz tells,
When, with the zephyr's fluctuation swinging,
The lilies shake their bells.

There clear reflections of the days departed,
Like weird auroras, flush the silent sky,
And phantoms of the lost, the tender-hearted,
Embrace us lovingly.

There haggard Anguish peacefully reposes,
And darling arms unhappy Love enfold ;
Despair lies down upon a bed of roses,
And Penury wades in gold !

The mother feels again upon her bosom
The tender pressure of her darling's head,
And clasps a shade of that transplanted blossom,
By angels coveted.

Heaven opens awful on the Christian's vision,
He fears, and sees, with half-suspended breath,
The white-robed Elders, and the palms Elysian,
And Jesus conquering Death!

The maiden mourning for her shipwrecked lover,
While on the pictured past her fancy dwells,
Beholds once more his image bend above her,
And hears her marriage bells!

Yea, with whatever of desire or passion
The pilgrim walks this mystic land, he sees
His thoughts take shape, and counterfeit the fashion
Of strict realities.

But on the left there lies a valley lonely,
Wherein is naught of quiet or delight;
Haunted by Shapes that love the darkness only,
And terrify the night.

There screams the horned owl from caves abysmal,
The vampyre broods, and night-winds moan away ;
And the blank moon makes desolation dismal
With her distracted ray.

Beware, beware! for hideous and gigantic
Are they who there in dreadful ambush lie;
A goblin crew! most merciless and frantic,
Whose names are *Incubi*.

They seize the vagrant in these paths of error,
Bind him, and sit like lead upon his breast,
And grin and glower on his speechless terror
And motionless unrest.

In breathless swoons he sinks, and dizzy trances,
Or hears his death announced from room to room,
While ever in his dim brain grows and dances
Some visionary doom.

Fear shrieks within him, but his tongue refuses
Translation of the thunder-thoughts that roll
To silent lips: his limbs forget their uses,
And hope forsakes his soul.

Here also bide those baneful Sprites that sprinkle
Malarious dew on night-belated men,
And Imps malign whose phosphor-lanterns twinkle
O'er many a fatal fen.

Ah, venture not upon those regions chasmal!
Those haunts of horror—that unholy ground!
I doubt if sights so ghastly and phantasmal
May elsewhere be found.

Such is the Kingdom, over whose existence
The brooding shades of mortal doubt are cast;
Such is the Realm that, dim with night and distance,
Lies unexplored and vast.

Wherefore I come among you, friends and strangers,
Adventureful, fatigued and travel-worn;
Returning, by a route beset with dangers,
Unto the coasts of morn;

Whereon I find the magic spell is broken,
And skilful fiction all the record seems;
And Memory holds the solitary token
Of the dim LAND OF DREAMS.

LINCOLN.

I HEARD the solemn bells that flung
The mournful tidings to the air—
The tale of horror and despair,
From many a belfry's iron tongue.
I saw the flag he loved so well,
Sad with the crapes of woe,
Droop heavily and low,
From dome and mast and citadel,—
The quivering lip, and half-suspended breath
Of him who listened to the tale of death,
As friend to friend rehearsed
That crime without a name, abhorred! accurst!
And those last hours when slowly ebb'd away—
As mute and motionless he lay,
The life of him who since the world began,
Best earned the title of an honest man!

To-day the solemn pageant goes,
That bears him to his last repose,
As if some midnight cloud had past
Athwart the noonday sun, and sent
Its sudden shadow, black and vast,
Across the frightened continent—

To-day from forge, and mart, and mill,
 All sound and sign of commerce flits;
 And in a thousand rooms,
 Among the idle looms,
 Lone Silence like a widow sits,
 And many-fingered Industry is still !

O LINCOLN, kind and just !
 O steadfast to thy trust,
 To keep from death the hope of Liberty !
 Savior of the Republic ! long for thee
 Shall countless freemen mourn, and hold thy name
 Revered, beloved, a legacy of Fame !
 Hark ! while a Nation's bells are tolled,
 Swinging sonorous,
 In iron chorus,
 For a People's sorrow uncontrolled !
 Ring ! until the mighty knell is rolled,
 In long reverberations manifold,
 O'er prairies wild and savage seas,
 From cliff to cliff, from breeze to breeze,
 Till the last sentry on the far frontier,
 Shall pause upon his lonely beat to hear
 The trackless forests to the thunder shiver,
 Of Freedom's echoes, sounding on forever !

Mourn, generous Nation ! mourn for him whose
 word
 Seemed sometimes quaintly wise and mild—
 The artless language of a child,
 Yet sometimes like an Angel's of the Lord !
 Mourn for the ruler whose sublime decree,
 Tremendous as a thunder-stroke

Of righteous retribution, broke
Those cruel chains, our curse and long disgrace,
That bound to hopeless toil a weaker race,
And made it "Henceforth and forever free!"
Mourn for the Pilot, whose sagacious eye
 Could on the lurid verge descry
 Rebellion's threatening star—
 Blood-red, and ominous of war;
And who at last when Treason's storm of hate
 Broke o'er the Ship of State,
Sprang to the helm, and with a giant's arm,
 Held her amid the whirlpools and the shocks
 Of maddened surges and of hidden rocks,
Till he beheld the angry tumult cease,
 And brought her without harm,
 Into a port of peace,
 Across those perilous seas,
With all her colors flying in the breeze!

Let the great bells of sorrow toll,
And the drums in muffled thunder roll,
For Freedom's martyr, peace unto his soul!
 Let the sable car roll on—
 Slowly toward the setting sun,
 Nobly hath he wrought and won,
 And on earth his work is done!
While the funeral trumpets blow,
And populous cities overflow
With vast fraternities of woe—
 Bear him on while thousands weep,
 To his long and lasting sleep.
From the highest seat on earth,

To the quiet valley of his birth,
 Bring him tenderly, that here
 The hand of the awakening Year,
 May strew her earliest blossoms on the dust
 Of the wise, the good, the just !

With trailing banner and with sable plume—
 While the music of his dirges,
 On the hushed air wails and surges—
 Down the avenues of lengthened gloom,
 And on to where the midnight torches
 Flare on crowded piers and porches,
 On from town to town, from state to state,
 Where mourning populations wait
 Hour by hour, and day by day, to show
 All that stricken love can now bestow—
 Bear him, our great American, to rest,
 Within the bosom of the giant West !
 But let the fortress from its brazen lips
 Shout to the shuddering ships,
 That the greatly good die not in vain,
 For treason's star is sunk in black eclipse,
 Never to rise again !

O great Backwoodsman, Statesman, President !
 If this our loud lament
 Can reach the glorious station where thou art—
 Take to thine own great heart
 The homage and the gratitude we owe !
 We never knew we loved thee so,
 Till thou didst vanish at the Shining Gate,
 Leaving us desolate !

Ah me, the slow revolving years
Shall come again, and go,
And stars and seasons circle in their spheres,
Perennial as our woe!
Ashes to ashes! but his name
Shall live in music on the lips of Fame;
And year by year shall patriots come,
With Youth and tottering Age, to kneel
As pilgrims by that hallowed tomb,
And weeping silently shall feel
His grandest monument to be
The praises of the just, the reverence of the Free!



THE OLD PINE.

LIKE some tall chieftain left alone,
When all his race is dead,
High o'er the ever-murmuring sea,
Crag-fastened firm, the old Pine Tree
Still lifts his hoary head.

The kingly qualities that made
His fallen fathers grand,
In him with triple force are set,
Lord of a ravaged realm, but yet,
A monarch in the land!

Their sturdiness of heart and blood,
And iron-fibred limb,
With all their aggregated strength,
Down lessening lines descend at length,
To culminate in him!

Unfaint he takes the summer sun,
Or wrestles with the gale,
When the hoarse tempest chafes the main,
And hail stones rain, like frozen grain,
From Winter's iron flail!

Religions, empires, centuries,
Decay and rise again ;
The world rolls on, and fortunes strange,
Of chance and accident, and change,
Disturb the ways of men :

Unmoved above the shifting scene,
He stands serene, sublime,
Clothed with enduring powers to mock
The heaving frost, the earthquake's shock,
And hardly touched by time !



A HEALTH TO CONNECTICUT.

Now in a pint of "native grape"—
 (My blessing on the sender !)
Whose blush is not the kind that owns
 The fixing of the vender—
To hardy old Connecticut,
 A hearty health I render—
May despots ever fear her name,
 And patriot arms defend her !

Howe'er the wrangling factions rage,
 Still true as steel we hail her,
Still find on Fame's historic page,
 A record to avail her.
Till Freedom dies she shall not want
 True hearts that will not fail her,
To vindicate her majesty,
 And silence her assailer !

Shall pumpkin-pie be e'er forgot,
 Or those Thanksgiving dinners—
Where marshaling a household host,
 Of hungry saints and sinners,
Attacking Turkey long and strong,
 At last we ended winners,
Or only beat retreat to make
 More room for new beginners ?

Can we forget the good old days,
Ere homespun bowed to satin—
When girls were taught the spinning-wheel,
Instead of doubtful Latin?
The deacon's drone, the parson's queu,
The square box pews we sat in?
The good old State, and golden time,
We saw and did all that in?

Then here's to old Connecticut—
God's benizon upon her!
Who shows so fair a register,
However we may con her;
Long may she live! and long enjoy
The fame her worth has won her—
Long live to rear her gallent sons
For posts of trust and honor!



AMOR TYRANNUS.

OH! gentler than a Fairy creeps
Into a moonlit flower,
Love slides into the heart that sleeps
And hardly shows his power.

But there, a tyrant grown, in vain
His fortress we assail ;
The despot laughs at all our pain,
And all our struggles fail.

Too late we learn, at fatal cost,
How impotent we are ;
When Caution slumbers at her post,
And leaves the door ajar !

AUTUMN.

BEARING the shining sickle in his hand,
And crowned with chaplets of the nodding wheat,
Autumn, the Reaper, stalks along the land,
With drifts of dead leaves blown about his feet.

The scarlet glories that enrobe the woods,
Witch-voices haunting groves of ash and elm,
Inverted skies that float in glassy floods,
Make the wide landscape an enchanted realm !

No more is heard the reaper's ringing blade,
No more the blackbird whistles in the sedge,
No more the crimson-fingered village maid,
Seeks the wild fruitage of the berry hedge ;

But from the hills the smiles of Summer die,
And trailing vapors hang in dismal shrouds,
And slowly through the blue fields of the sky
The winds, like shepherds, drive the fleecy clouds.

Now comes the mellow Indian Summer time,
When wold and woodland, stretching far and fair,
In panoramic splendor lie sublime,
And waver in the illuminated air !

November seems with golden June to join,
And from the morning windows, ice-embossed,
The fairies of the warm west wind purloin
The silver pictures of the artist, Frost !

As some sad lover, touched with soft regret,
Pauses, remembering all his lady's charms,
Then chides the weakness that cannot forget,
And turns again to seek her happy arms ;

So the weak Year, too foolish and too fond,
Reverses his slow steps and backward goes,
Irresolute to break so sweet a bond,
And leave unkist the summer's latest rose !

Caught by unequal gusts, the vane on high
From point to point perpetually swings ;
And like some giant fowl that strives to fly,
The windmill flutters its enormous wings !

In orchards heaped with fruit the ragged trees
Sigh hoarsely each to each with windy words,
And toss their bare arms to the fitful breeze,
Like frantic misers loath to lose their hoards.

The russet fields, resigning to the flail
Their golden sheaves are yet not all bereft ;
For here and there, drab-drest, the quaker-quail,
Like gleaning Ruth, secures what man has left.

But more suspicious, the marauding crow,
Still eyes the sentry effigy askance,
That guards its post through all the storms that blow,
And swings and spins as in an elfin dance !

By lonely lakes and marshy-bottomed vales
The waterfowl assemble night by night,
Till all the covey, warned by colder gales,
Trails to the south its long loquacious flight

In countless tribes that blur the harvest moon,
And make the heavens clamorous as they go,
Haply, if ere they reach some far lagoon,
No sportsman's tube shall lay their leader low !

For now the Pilgrim festival is near,
When all the various crop is safely stored—
Honored Thanksgiving, to New England dear,
When fowl, or wild or tame, controls the board !

Once more around the old familiar hearth
The household draws, and tuneful voices ring,
And annual games well worn and rustic mirth
Swell high the honors of the Harvest King !

Yet even while we pledge his jovial reign,
Our gayest songs are saddened in their tone ;
And a new ruler, with his boisterous train,
Usurps the realm and climbs into the throne ;

And all too soon the bounty-dropping star
Dips toward the darkened verge and sinks below,
And o'er the waste white Winter's clattering car
Approaches swift, whirled in a cloud of snow !

JUNE.

AH ! who is she that comes along the lawn,
Attended by the music of the dawn ?
What goddess this, with bramble-roses crowned,
While all around,
A thousand airy warblings fill the bowers
With notes of jubilee ?
What Vision on the mountains blue,
Her ankles dashed with morning dew,
Brushed from the half-awakened flowers,
And her streaming ringlets brown,
About her naked shoulders blown,
By the sea wind wantonly ?

Ah, June !

Capricious man may peevishly impugn
The raw, rough March, or April's doubtful days,
Or even May, which in our northern clime,
Is merry only in some poet's rhyme,
But thou dost touch him with desire of praise !

For now the fragrant leas
Buzz with industrious bees,
Blown up and down in odorous gales,
Loaden with honey-dew ;
And April lambs improve in pastures new ;
And from the festal vales,

In romping bands the village children come,
With sun-browned faces, aprons full of bloom,
And bonnets trimmed with bud and vine,
Singing such frolic ditties that the kine,
Sunning their brindled sides in cowslip beds,
Rise lazily and turn their heads,
With the soul of brute surprise
Looking out of their large eyes !

Imperial, passionate June !
Thou comest not too soon,
But waitest, beautiful and calm,
Until the gusts that rent the skies of May,
Sink into gales of balm,
And like departing music fade away !
Then, like a conquering queen,
Self-centered and serene,
Fair as a maiden in her bridal flowers,
Thou movest through the woodland bowers,
Smiling sunshine, singing consolation,
Awaking a response of exultation !

With what a well-contented note
The pigeon coos about his cote !
What flamy flushes streak thy golden morns !
What sunny comfort warms they mellow noon !
What pearly lustre gilds the shining horns,
Of thy resplendent moon—
Dear June ! delightful June !

BY THE SEA—A MEMORY.

ALONE, alone, alone,
I walk by the sounding shore ;
I hear the wild winds talking,
And the breaker's answering roar ;
But they hold a mystic language
I cannot understand,
Though my soul it longs and listens,
As I pace the silver sand,
To the deep, æolian syllables,
Blown from the winter land—
The thunder-surging sentences,
That crash along the strand !

I listen and I ponder,
And my spirit longs for him,
For whom the book of the Universe
Held nothing vague or dim ;
For I cannot grasp the meaning,
And my soul is less at ease,
Than the gull that plunges through the surf,
And wrestles with the breeze !
But alas ! for nevermore
Will he pace the sands with me,
While I hear his grand translation
Of the old time mystery—
The solemn wind a-talking,
And the answer of the sea !

Therefore by these sad waves,
A spell forever lies,
And from these sullen-sighing pines,
The ancient music dies ;
And from yonder beetling cliff,
That catches the earliest day,
And every olden haunt we loved,
The glory fades away !
And as a wandering child at night
Moves on in doubt and pain,
And unto the desolate darkness,
Doth wofully complain,
I wake the echoes with my cries,
And call, and call in vain,
And listen long for the kindly voice
I never shall hear again !
He might have left a name,
Revered, inviolate,
Aloft in the pantheon of Fame,
With names of the good and great,—
The princes of the realm of rhyme,
Or God-like, vigilant, sublime,
Have held the helm of state ;
But his soul, like a carolling lark,
Soared high o'er Time and Fate,
Till the sentinel-seraphim heard his voice,
And opened the shining gate !
So I dream of an angel waiting,
Where never the wild winds roar,
But the dying ripple in music breaks,
On a golden-sanded shore ;
And I give my tears to the vanished years,
A joy I shall find no more !

WINTER WINDS.

WHEN I the winter wind can hear,
And blithely sings the hemlock tree,
And the moon's slim sickle glitters clear,
On a November sea,

So brave a mood the season shows,
He finds me jolly day by day ;
I let my cares die with the rose,
And all my songs are gay !

So merrily then the frost king shakes
The snowy powder from his locks ;
So merrily through the frozen brakes
I track the hungry fox ;

Or when the enchanted floods congeal
By night to crystal pavements, bind
On eager feet the sounding steel,
And leave the wind behind !

All sights and sounds that please me most,
With thee, hale Winter, come and go ;
Gray uplands silvery with frost,
And clamorous with the crow ;

Still glens and purple summits cold,
And the bald woods more pleasure bring
Then all the younger seasons hold,
What e'er the poets sing.

But now the winter days are spent,
The winter winds are blown away;
I waste the hours in discontent
And sicken of the May.

To see the rose indeed is good—
To hear the swallows at the eaves;
But more to me the wailing wood,
And the smell of sodden leaves!

'Tis true I value at his rate,
The man who warms in Springs defence—
The buxom hours that reinstate
The sovereignty of sense;

But I feast my soul on royal cheer,
I laud the season, brave and free,
When I the winter wind can hear,
And blithely sings the hemlock tree!

THE FISH-MARKET.

THIS is the Fish-Market : and all about me,
I see uncooked, the dishes I endorse ;
Sending an eager appetite throughout me,
With thoughts of "Yorkshire sauce !"

And here's a halibut—a hundred pounder !
With edible fins—a fact considered odd ;
With mottled mackerel, and dejected flounder.
And melancholy cod.

Oh, what an epicurean, queer sensation,
Invades my nerves, and o'er my palate steals—
A longing for a savory, salt sea-ration,
When I contemplate eels !

And oysters too ! How could these gentle verses
Descant at length on these delightful themes ;
But yet—alas for impecunious purses,
I eat them but in dreams !

Again in dreams, I see the dextrous waiter,
Unhinge those bivalves—interesting sight !
While I engulf them, like some yawning crater,
With growing appetite !

Adjacent, also, the congenial cruet's
Pungent persuasion makes me yearn for more ;
But when quite gorged, I ask him what is due, it's
A most astounding score !

However, if I grow but one day older,
I'll superintend the cooking of each dish,
And spread a board to startle the beholder,
And fill myself with fish !

I'll have a blue-fish, stuffed with sage and cracker,
Long Island clams, stewed, fried, and in a pie ;
The Muse must have good provender to back her,
And so, in fact, must I !

I'll have sea-bass, and lobster in the shell,
The only mode to save the ocean flavor—
And salmon, which I like extremely well,
And cod-steaks, which I favor.

Turtle I'll have—not mock, that's a delusion !
But genuine Dry Tortugas—iron-clad ;
Muscles, and shrimps, in opulent profusion,—
Some scallops won't go bad !

I'll have gilt "Bills of Fare" on satin ribbon,
Note how each dish is caught, by net or hook ;
And be a royal Roman—after Gibbon,
And deify the cook !

I'll have a taste of most that lives in water,
From Madagascar to the Straits of Behring ;
But I must pause for lunch ; my dearest daughter,
Go buy me a red-herring !

TO A FROG.

UNCOUTH batrachian ! ye whose curious tribe,
So long unsung, invites the comic muse,
What shall be said of thee to tempt the mood
Of frolic fancy ? Sitting on a log,
Oft have I watched thy quaint placidity,
Who ever as my vagrant step approached,
With quick galvanic spasm would'st hurl thyself—
With leap precipitate and headlong plunge,
Into the startled pool, emerging soon,
With wary eye at some remoter point,
Scanning the scant horizon of thy sea—
A stagnant mill-pond, for an enemy.

'Tis natural to wish to be the first
In something, and in native homeliness,
Thou peerless art, and both grotesque and grave—
Profound and sage and impurtable,
Thou art the very Bunsby of the brook !

But unlike those who outer show denotes
An excellence quite foreign to the truth—
Horrid thou art, not dangerous. Virtue moves
Immaculate through the slippery dens of vice,
Her snow-white wings unsullied by a stain !

So thou, habituant of malarial pools,
Emergest shining, with thy grass-green vest
Untarnished as a virgin emerald !
But thou, like man, existence cannot buy,
Exempt from insecurity. Above,
The fish-hawk, with sagacious glance observes
Thy slightest motion, and voracious drops,
Swift as a stone through the resistless air,
And bolts thee all remorseless ! Underneath
The gudgeon and the pickerel take thee in,
Or reckon thee among their sure assets.
So life is full of danger. Weaponless
Art thou, not like the lean and hungry shark,
Whose serrate jaws with quick fatality
Deracinates his prey with sudden snap,
Or that spasmodic eel whose stunning shock,
Electric, strikes with unexpected death
His huge antagonist, thy simple life
Is but too frequently abridged to serve
Some epicurean appetite that finds
Thy fine transparent flesh most delicate.

Time was, when yet the new-created world
Was but a mass of mud ; and muck and mire
Comprised the total of the real estate
Of the apochryphal preadamites—
Concerning which, astute geologists
Expound queer facts, or else colossal lies !
Chaos was king ; and the mephitic air,
Surcharged with carbon irrespirable,
Bred hideous shapes, which but to nominate,
Forces philosophy to tongues extinct.

This was the very paradise of frogs !
The seventh heaven of the Iguanodon,
The Ichthyosaurus, and the nameless forms—
Shapes hideous as nightmare—that alone
Inhabited the unaccomplished world.
And there, conjectureless, thy one wild note,
Traversed the desolate and dismal void,
With stridulous vociferation harsh,
That made more grim the illimitable waste,
With ululation indescribable !
But where was naught but universal slough,
Now stand the populous places of the earth,
Where numerous as the industrious ant that builds
His arenicious domes in spicy woods
Of far Brazil, man congregates, of whom
Not insignificant the number who
Have been the theme of high poetic praise—
Worth less because they rapined on their kind
By aid of reason which thou hast not—crushed
The poor, assumed an air of righteousness—
Were first where ostentatious charity
Made human devils look respectable—
Drove to the church in punctual gorgeousness,
In gilded equipages—men less worth
Than many a frog that on a brookside bog
Enjoys the sunshine of his little day,
That never robbed his friend, or broke the heart
Of orphans by extortionate designs,
Made widows suicides, or forced to crime
Impoverished virtue ; but enough of this :
Weak man is full of fallibility ;
Justice is hoodwinked, and her good right arm

That should but bear the sword of equity,
Is often palsied by a golden weight.
But fare the well, my friend : I must be brief :
My song grows hoarse ; my hurdy-gurdy's tired ;
And so like thee, I'll plunge myself again
Into blank silence and obscurity,
Till more poetic sunshine thaws me out !



SPRING.

THE earth is dark and cold to-night ;
The heavens are full of rain ;
And swathed in robes of muffling cloud,
Comes stormy March again.

The herald of the Spring is he,
Though clad in icy mail ;
Along the land I hear him wind
His war-horn of the gale !

The flower-seeds in the frozen ground,
Soon as his voice they hear,
Whisper among themselves,—Behold,
The golden days are near !

He leads his sisters by the hand—
His younger sisters two,
Sweet April with a violet,
And May with eyes of blue.

The first, she only weeps and weeps,
With some mysterious woe ;
Her gracious tears they fall in showers,
That thaw the earth below.

But pensive to the last, she dies ;
And lo ! about her bed
Upspring a thousand tender plants,
To mourn the early dead.

But when they see the jolly May,
Forgetting all their gloom—
They put their gayest garments on,
And laugh outright in bloom !



IN THE LIBRARY.

My best companions are my books;
About the library's quiet nooks
I linger long, at ease reclined,
And live with masters of the mind.

A spell is on my fancy cast
By wits and poets of the past,
And as I turn each yellow page
I dwell in many a vanished age.

I revel in the fancies fine
Of all the long, illustrious line;
They talk to me by day and night,
And seem to watch me as I write.

So musing on their deathless fame,
I think—shall I too, leave a name?
Shall my poor songs, when I am dumb,
Delight some heart in years to come?

THE KALIEDOSCOPE.

TURN the Kaleidoscope, Time !
On a weary journey you long have been,
Shadowy showman, bent and thin—
Showman of Shadows ! pause you here,
And set on its legs your queer machine—
Your crystalline, panoramic sphere—
A duplicate, counterfeit creation—
A microcosm, 'tis said, wherein
The shifting events of the rolling world,
Are shaken, reformed, confused and whirled,
In a never ending permutation !

For joys fly upward and grief descends,
In wrecked ambition or flight of friends,
Losses of station and dreams of bliss
That dazzle and cheat us ; Life is this !—
Till shaken in faith, and robbed of hope,
The planets themselves, to our mortal scope,
Seem only to topple, and flare, and reel,
Like glints and shards in the mighty wheel
Of God's enormous Kaleidoscope,
Where rains of meteors that affright
The pallid satellites of the night,
And red auroras, flickering far,

Like Scandinavian ghosts at war,
Horrent with lightning javelins seem
Like the weird mirage of a demon's dream,
Till torn asunder by bolts of thunder,
And irresistable whirlwind spasms,
Luridly through cloud-rifted chasms
They flash and fade, while we fear and wonder,
In a dazed, vertiginous, speechless spell
As a soul looks in through the gates of hell !

So turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
Let us see what you have to reveal !
Tell me first, pray, what are those tinsel things,
To each of which a parasite clings,
And flutters his vain, gilt, gossamer wings,
Up there in the top of the wheel !
“Look again ! though they seem as if never to fall,
There are treacherous quicksands under them all !
If I touch them now with the slightest shake,
See how they tremble, and reel and quake !
If I give them one revolution more,
They tumble, behold you ! by the score,
And slide on the blood-red, slippery slope
That you see in my World-Kaleidoscope,
Vascillant, tottering, down they go,
As I turn so steady and slow,
Dragging to death those frightened drones ;
Would any one guess they were emperors' thrones ?”

Turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
This is curious sport for me !
Steady, good Gaffer, steady and slow ;
I have lain so long in an idle trance,

And the world, they say, is so much in advance,
I have missed a step in the century-dance ;
And the singular sights are so many, you know,
To be seen in your grand, cosmoramical show,
One wants a good chance to see !

Turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
What is here ? a rain of blood ?
“ No, rubies ! that range of their own accord,
Into one burning, immortal word—
It is Liberty !” That is good !

“ Yes, Liberty, equal for all and each,
Liberal thought, unhindered speech,
As far as the reason of man may reach !
For the world is old and drowsy, and needs
Something to lift her out of the weeds
Of cant and custom, and make her free !
New thoughts to kindle and vivify her,
With shocks electric and thunder-fire !
Something to thrill, and shake her, and wake her
Out of her dead, dumb lethargy !”

Turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
“ Passage of seasons, revolving years,
Rising and setting of rolling spheres,
Waking from death of vernal flowers,
Increscence and waning of circling moons—
Butterflies bursting their shroud-cocoons,
To sail on their silken fans away,
In the light of their resurrection day—
Everything in this world of ours,
Are types of glory yet to be—

Suggestions of immortality ;
And whirl in the gyres of God and spin,
To bring the perfect creation in—
The Golden Period, long foretold,
By prophet-poets and seers of old,
Through cycles of progress manifold."

Turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
For there flits in your glass the strange display,
And flickering flames of *Autos da Fe*,
Mingled with dungeon-rings and gags,
Sanctified masks, rose-watered rags,

And a few brown bones of a saint !
"Souvenirs for a coming day,
When superstition shall pass away,
And no more the bigot's frenzied scream
Shall startle the maiden's peaceful dream,
Nor the innocent mind of the child be crammed
With gibbering spectres of the damned ;
But reason released from age-long thrall,
Find the love of Christ sufficient for all.
See, this is a broken crosier, and these
The skull-shaped beads of rosaries,—
Religion at ease ! as in Thibet-Land,
Where they turn a windlass and pray by hand !
Pagoda-tinkle of bells o'erhead,
In the porch a heretic lying dead,
But they never do such things now, you know,
For this was in ages long ago !"

Turn the Kaleidoscope, Time !
A forest of dancing plumes
Now in the glittering wheel appears—

Ah me! but these are magnificent hues!
Splendid prismatic dissolving views,
Of broken sabres, red-rusted spears,
Torches, and clasped hands and tears,
With mixture of victories and defeats,
And battered cities and shattered fleets,
And fiery-furrowed glooms!

“ Relics of old tyrannical wars,
Fought in eclipse of the morning stars,
But where the right at length prevailed,
Though long confounded and sore assailed,
For man but sees the beginning of things,
Yet to and fro the pendulum swings
Of the mighty chronometer of time,
Through the measureless arc of a sweep sublime;
And ticking the centuries, slowly brings,
In splendors that break o’er eternity’s sea,
The perfect ages that are to be—
When shall dawn in my World-Kaleidoscope,
The glory of peace and Christian hope!”



STORM AND CALM.

THE Storm-god came out of the ocean,
And roared through his wave-worn caves ;
And hissed like a fretful demon,
Far over the foam-white waves !

But when the red sun, re-arisen,
Over-crimsoned the sea with his glow ;
As calm was the long, flat billow,
As the drowned men who slumbered below.

Oh, never seemed half so lovely,
The watery, wide expanse ;
Or more peacefully heaved the bosom
Of a maiden in saintly trance !

So the turbulent gusts of passion
Sweep over the storm-tossed breast ;
And stir its unfathomed abysses,
With an infinite, vague unrest !

But when the invincible spirit,
Defiant, shall vanquish its pain,
Having tasted earth's bitterest sorrow,
No torture can touch it again.

For the holy, ineffable quiet,
That follows a long despair,
Comes down like a benediction
On a penitent soul at prayer !

SUMMER RAIN.

WHEN heather and hill are glad with bloom,
And the grass is tall and green,
And the moth and the glancing dragon fly
About the brooks are seen ;
Though brute and bird are glad again,
In the light of the Summer lea,
There is joy for the many moods of men,
And the rainy days are the days for me!

Something of sadness, I know not what,
Yet pleasure more than pain,
Like minor music is borne to me,
In the sweep of the summer rain.
So tender and sweet the peace it brings,
I love it howe'er it be,
And have made a song my fancy sings—
The rainy days are the days for me!

When bees creep into hollyhocks,
And the violet closes her hood,
And the mountain showers come dancing down
And roaring over the wood ;
Under the roof I laugh amain,
As I hark to the hornpipe free,
Of the myriad-footed, musical rain—
Rain of Summer, so dear to me !

For the snow will come when the earth is dead,
And the butterfly-days are done ;
When the lark no more shall carol in air,
Nor the mill-wheel flash in the sun ;
When the East is cold, and the wind complains
In the reeds by the shivering sea,
And I shall sigh for the warm June rains—
For the Summer rain, so dear to me!



THE FISHERMAN'S DREAM.

The silent-footed midnight, sad and slow,
Moved eastward, muffled in her dusky robe,
Like some proud queen, exiled and full of woe,
And weeping round the globe.

I heard the murmurs of the tumbling streams,
Far off and low, that droned a dreamy tune ;
I wandered down the purple vale of dreams,
Beneath the summer moon.

And softly to my open casement came
Sweeps of weird music, wafted from the sea ;
Enticing voices seemed to call my name.
And winds to talk to me.

O mortal toiler come ! they seemed to say,
Lament no longer for thy sad estate ;
Arise and trim thy sail, and come away,
And triumph over fate.

Gay dwellers in the Happy Isles are we,
Who know not any care the livelong day ;
Fair lies our home beyond the summer sea ;
Sad mortal come away,

To loll all day beneath the orange trees,
Beside the noise of crystal-spouting springs,
In spicy climes, with no remembrances
Of melancholy things.

Or else along white fields of murmuring foam
To chase the breaking ripples as they run ;
Away ! away ! a thousand miles from home,
And back before the sun

Sinks to his evening bath in western floods ;
Or else in great sea-shells to float asleep,
Rocked by sweet gales that blow from Indian woods,
Along the charmed deep !

These songs and more they sang, that fainter grew,
And died upon the dark, and wholly ceased,
As Morning with her sandals wet with dew,
Came blushing up the east.

I rose ; my nets lay broken by the brine,
As sunrise burst o'er lawns and pastures fair ;
I heard the bleat of flocks, the low of kine,
And soaring larks in air.

And all seemed joyous as the day arose,
While I alone was downcast and opprest ;
Heart-heavy with a weight of fancied woes,
And worried with unrest.

But in my heart I heard another voice,
Low toned and full of peace, that seemed to say,
Behold the creatures of the field rejoice,
And art thou less than they ?

Know all conditions tend to perfect ends :
Perform thy lot : to Heaven leave the rest.
All things work out the good which God intends ;
The means, he knoweth best.



THE BEE.

OH, the bee is a careless rover !

Into the meadow at morning he goes,
Sipping the nectar out of the clover,
Going to sleep in the heart of the rose ;
Or caught by a zephyr and wafted away,
Sailing o'er gardens gorgeous and gay,
When the balmy south wind blows !

Borne o'er billowy fields and valleys ;
Whirled through odorous orchard alleys ;
Over the dappled forest pool,
Cedar-scented, dim and cool,
Where beneath her leafy screen,
The lily floats like a Naiad queen ;
In and out of the lights and shadows,
Over the dandelion meadows,
Little brown bee,
What cares he ?
Floral burglar, bold and free !

What will he do when it rains, I wonder,
To hide himself from the wet and thunder ?
He will creep into the tulip's chalice,
Veined and stained like a fairy's palace,

While to himself a song he sings,
And revels in perfume as he swings;
 Little brown bee,
 What cares he
How the rain sweeps over the lea ?
 By and by, when skies are clear,
 His pink pavilion will unfold,
 And behold !
The burly reveller reappear,
 With the pollen on his wings !
 But little he cares
 For the look he bears,
For he is a royal bandit bold,
And wears a double belt of gold,
 And hidden underneath,
 A rapier in its sheath !
And what we think of him, you or me,
Little recks the wee brown bee.

No fear of dangerous mishap,
That lurks in red snapdragon's trap;
Nor bristling thistle's horny spurs,
His fierce audacity deters;
Of what the lawless plunderer will,
The dainty epicure takes his fill.

Where will he go when frosty weather
Strikes with blight the hedge and heather ?
When wet leaves strew the garden walk,
And the dahlia shivers on her stalk,
And the desolate, early snows,
Ravage the fields and ruin the rose ?

Ah, then he hies to his sylvan home
Of hollow oak and waxen comb,
And sleeps and feasts, and sings and sleeps,
While the storm about him sweeps !

For the wee brown bee,

What cares he,

Whether the weather and heather agree ?

But he dreams of the buttercups and clover,

'Till the winter is over,

Then rubs his rings,

And trims his wings,

And frolics away like a reckless rover,

Hunting for blossoms and stealing the honey,

Hoarding it up as a miser his money.

Gay pillager of honey dew,

Go, ransack all my garden through,

And take or taste what suits thy fancy,

Of heliotrope, or pink, or pansy,

Sweet pea, or darling mignonette,

Tall gladiole, or violet.

Only let me hear thy tune,

Every sunny afternoon,

Insect troubadour of June !

Chant me, pray, another stave

Of thy solo, faint and fine !

Grander music some may have,

None is half so quaint as thine ;

Like the drowsy monotone

Of a tiny bagpipe's drone.

Oh, would I too, might roam, and be
Thy summer comrade, fancy-free !
And leave, for aye, the cares and strife
That vex with trouble mortal life,
 And follow the spring,
 And sail and sing,
Gypsy of the air ! with thee,
Busy, buzzy, wee brown bee !



THE PRISONERS OF TIME.

THE world is a prison old,
And we are captives all;
For the tyrant Time, he reigns sublime,
And holdeth us in thrall.

A restless multitude,
We wander to and fro,
By hopes allured, that unsecured,
Still lead from woe to woe.

With masks of ghastly mirth,
Some hide an inward care;
With griefs unknown, some weep alone,
And waste with mute despair !

The beautiful and brave,
Console us but a day ;
Though fondly nurst, they fail us first,
And soonest pass away.

Momently opens and shuts
The black, sepulchral door,
And the blessed souls that go that way,
Return to us no more.

No more to the haunts of pain,
And the cells of Sin and Fear,
But walk in white, in a purer light,
And a finer atmosphere!

The warden named Death,
He sitteth by the gate,
And guardeth well, for good or ill,
The secret keys of fate

Nor pity nor remorse
That iron heart can move;
Yet sometime he will beckon me,
To follow those I love.

What though God's jewels star
This azure roof of ours—
This verdant floor be sprinkled o'er
With miracles of flowers?

Weak types of glories hid!
For grander scenes we sigh;
We pine for stars that never pale,
And flowers that never die!

For we know there is a land,
Hesperian and fair,
Whereof in dreams we catch such gleams,
As bring us half-way there!

With endless change of phrase,
Our sad appeals ascend;
Oh! not inured, though long immured,
When shall our bondage end?

AGRICOLA.

A man of humble tastes am I,
Rude and untutored, knowing not
The dim ways of philosophy,
Or sunlit altitudes of thought.

Few are my wants: my days are spent
With God and Nature, far from strife;
My heart hath found the true content,
That gilds the humbler walks of life.

Fortune hath cast me not with those
Who hand in hand with Science walk;
But tell me how the violet blows,
And I will listen to your talk!

Thus love I not the brawling town,
Where change and tumult never cease,
And Folly's wild confusions drown
The songs of solitude and peace.

Green dells and woodland waterfalls,
More please me than gay Fashion's throng;
The music of their festive halls
Is nothing to my robin's song;

Who trills his rapsodies so loud
In glad bravuras, soaring free,
That you might fancy he was proud
To pipe his solos, all for me !

My draft no marble fountains pour,
Or nymph-supported urn distills ;
The brook that sparkles by my door,
Is the pure crystal of the hills.

No hot-house plants that shun the air,
Are they by which my grounds are graced ;
Here Nature is my gardener,
And sets the landscape to my taste.

All day the golden-banded bee
Hunts buckwheat bloom and clover top ;
And the sleek, happy kine for me,
All the day the lush-green pastures crop.

Thus days revolve and years go round—
A life to sordid strife unknown,
But like the mill-wheel, with a sound
Of tranquil gladness, all its own.

Then give me but my humble glen,
Fresh air to breathe and room for thought ;
I am at peace with God and men,
I am contented with my lot !

CHRISTMAS.

BITTERLY blows the winter wind,
Along the crowded street,
And whistles its jigs at my crazy blind,
But my child has nought to eat.

Sounds of music and revel come,
Borne on the frosty air;
And merry is many a splendid home,
And deep is my despair !

The gilded footman waits at the door,
'Till the dancers are out of breath :
But the tottering step of the starving poor,
Is the frantic dance of death !

Strains of the violin and flute
From the comic opera come ;
But the failing voice of Want is mute,
For Misery must be dumb.

It would trouble my lady that lolls at ease
In her satin elbow chair,
If were heard in the sigh of the icy breeze,
The wailing cry of Care.

It would worry my lord, with his delicate nerves—
His horses, his wines, and his gout,
To be told that anything else deserves
A thought, but his grand turnout!

On his downy rug the lap-dog lies,
Where the grate so blithely burns ;
Nor dreams, outside, that a beggar sighs
For the dainty dish he spurns !

From many a belfry's golden chime,
The old, glad anthem rings ;
And heavily my heart beats time
To the pendulum as it swings,

And I shrink and cower, as the crowds go by,
To the churches trimmed so gay ;
O, God ! and was it for such as I
That Christ was born to-day ?



AUTUMN LEAVES.

THERE comes a season when the forest leaves,
Ravaged by the fatal frost, flush hectic-red,
And then decay. So man, as life grows dim—
The heyday past—and frosts of age descend
On his sere locks, sees all his youthful hopes
Grow less and less. Bright fancies of the past
Illusions seem, but even as they fade,
Seem but more splendid that we have them not ;
Until at last, but ashes, ashes all !
That life can offer ; and we grope and pick
Among the cold, dead cinders of the past,
For one last spark to re-illumine the flame
Of hope upon the altar of the heart ;
Not finding it, we shiver toward the grave,
Sleep sound on that last bolster stuff'd with husks,
Forgotten by the world which we forgot !

Perhaps some day, in years that are to be,
Some antiquarian searcher of old tombs,
Shall scrape away the venerable moss—
Read half the tablet's record—guess the rest—
And think "my grandsire knew him when a boy,"
And speak of us as of a vanished thing—
Or nothing, of the antique past, less worth
Than the transcription of a mildewed slab.
Well, well ! we wither like the autumn leaf ;
And like sere foliage on the whirlwind borne,
Before the irresistible breath of Time
Vanish to nothingness, and are seen no more !

THE PHANTOM.

Out in the dark old forest,
There dwells a phantom of woe ;
When the winds arise I can hear his sighs,
As he wanders to and fro !

He smites the woods in his frenzy,
He strips the branches bare,
And sows like chaff, with a demon laugh,
The blood-red leaves on the air !

He wrestles with woes Titanic,
And dark deeds unforgiven ;
And grieves alone in a tongue unknown,
Like a soul shut out of heaven.

Above the crash of the tempest,
And the dismal roar of the rain,
When the bare limbs creak, I can hear his shriek
Of terror and of pain !

Last night from my chamber window,
I saw in the midst of the swamp,—
Through the murky gloom, his black pine plume,
And the gleam of his spectral lamp !

Outright his baleful omen,
Three times the owlet cried ;
And on the hearth the cricket's mirth
In sudden silence died.

In the midnight dead and solemn
He troubles my spirit most ;
For the soul still hears, though mortal ears
Their grosser sense have lost.

From trouble-haunted slumber
I start to hear aghast—
In the darkness deep, the awful sweep
Of his phantom steed—the blast.

But when, like a captive lady,
Looks the moon from her cloudy tower,
And the winds are at rest he loveth best
The influence of the hour.

Ah, then, the shadowy giant,
In mountain caverns deep,
Find space of rest for his troubled breast,
And grieves himself to sleep !

Oh, say, do I live in Witchland ?
Or is it the fever flame,
Whence fear is fed by a morbid dread
Of something without a name ?

For there dwells in the forest somewhere,
I am sure, a phantom of woe ;
When the winds arise I can hear his sighs,
As he wanders to and fro !

VIGIL.

THE air is still. From many towers
The stroke of deep nocturnal bells
Booms sullen through the dark, and tells
To man, the fleetness of his hours.

Dew-drenched the lattice lilacs weep :
The waning street-lamp winks and dies ;
Beyond, the lazy river lies,
And heaves its breast in summer sleep.

There, like a pendulum of light,
The lantern at the mast-head swings,
And casts its green and crimson rings
O'er the dusk water, through the night.

Like some grim Cyclops, looming dire,
Three miles away the lighthouse stands,
Lone guardian of his realm of sands,
A spectre, with an eye of fire.

To broken dreams that come and go,
And leave me wretched, I arise,
To lounge about the balconies,
And watch the large pale stars and slow,

That move across the solemn skies,
To sink behind the distant slopes—
Sad symbols of my vanished hopes,
That once were dreams of Paradise !

Yet as the lily lifts her bright
Dew-thirsty, golden-throated vase,
I upward look to drink the grace
And tender influence of the night.

The slow hours linger toward the morn ;
The lonely thoroughfares are still ;
And waning o'er the western hill
Dim Dian dips her silver horn.

All day with unremittent glare,
The sun has poured his ardent rays,
And after long midsummer days,
Brief night scarce cools the heated air.

Yet well I know along the lands,
Luxuriant vegetation shoots ;
And Autumn waiteth with her fruits,
To drop them in the toiler's hands !

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

It was a dreamer, lying at his ease,
Beneath the blossom-heavy apple-trees.
Then seemed it there came near his rose-hid haunt
A way-worn figure, hollow-eyed and gaunt,
With gaze forever fixed upon the ground,
As seeking for his grave with sighs profound.
The beaded drops stood on his brow like dew ;
And ever and anon his palm he drew
Across his temples, as if thought opprest,
By bitter memories that refused him rest.
His name was Care. He was an abject wight,
At whom the youthful dreamer laughed outright,
And raised his scornful eyes as if to say—
“Thou canst not fright the sunshine from my day !
Avaunt, old mummer,” then the young man cried !
“Until we meet again,” the Shade replied !
The loungee flung some daises in his face
Contemptuously. Then sudden to the place
Swept a shrunk figure, wrinkled and forlorn,
Who bore upon his arm a scythe well worn,
Spotted with crimson dew. In his lean hand
He held a glass, through which a rapid sand
Slid as his palsy shook it ; and his hair
Streamed white and meagre on the troubled air,

So swift he came, as if a rushing wind
Swept his thin raiment to the airs behind.
And gazing sadly on the musing lad,
And studying a parchment that he had—
Yellowed by age and tear-stained, with regret
He heaved a sigh which seemed to say, "Not yet !"

And from afar a ghostly convent's chime
Pealed its recitative—"In time! in time!"
While trifling with a captured butterfly,
The young man spake not, and the Thing passed by.

Followed another Shape, whose moving frame
Of juiceless bones did rattle as he came!
In his dry fist a bunch of darts he clutched,
And whatsoever living thing he touched
Was blighted and abolished. E'en the grass
He walked on withered; and through him did pass
The Summer noonday's indolent, faint wind,
Without obstruction. Horribly he grinned!
Round him the sweet day's redolence of bloom
Seemed overborne by odors of the tomb,
And dying herbs at funerals, and the sick,
Sad scents of wilted blossoms, strewn too thick
On new-made graves. Yet with a kingly stride
August he came, as with a conqueror's pride!

Then said the Skeleton, "My name is Death.
Whatever lives is mine. The babe's first breath
Bears him the curse of being. On the way
That I have walked lies ruin and decay,
Extinguished nations, and bare-bleached bones,
And crumbled palaces, and wrecks of thrones,

Ashes and desolation, wrath and woe !
The man who died a thousand years ago,
No safer is than he whose victor-brow
To-day receives inconstant Fortune's wreath ;
For I alone am deathless, being Death
Myself—except high God, whose minister
I am, to make vast earth one sepulcher !
The admonition of the falling leaf—
The mountains of dead shells whereof the reef
Is builded in mid-ocean—catacombs
Of extinct peoples, mummied in old tombs
And mausoleums of an elder time,
Corroborate me. Everything hath prime,
Decay and sinister abolishment.
Consider well then, ere thy day be spent
In shadowy pleasure, my sad argument ;
For a sure moment cometh when to dust
Thou shalt return, as all things breathing must."

But the rapt dreamer saw him not at all,
And seemed as if he heard but the faint fall
And dying cadence of the drowsy wind ;
For lightly smiling, he but plucked and twined
Grass-ribbons round his fingers ; or else blew
The thistle down aloof ; and as it flew
Laughed in his happy folly, unaware
That Fate that moment, hovering o'er him there,
Baptized him with her mildews of despair !
Beside him on the grass a cytharn lay,
O'er which his fingers languidly would play ;
And as he hummed himself an idle song,
Through the green orchard-aisles there tript along
A rose-flushed girl, who cast her gentle eyes

Upon the dreamer in a fond surprise,
And stooped and kissed him; and within his hair
Wove flowers, embracing him. With dream-like stare
He smiled upon her. An electric thrill
Shot through his tingled pulses, and his will
Was captive to that unexperienced mood.
Awhile the beatific vision stood
And watched his passion grow. But when the boy
Yearned toward her with anticipated joy,
She fled and vanished in the woodland glooms

As fall crisp icicles on churchyard tombs,
So rang her frozen laugh. As flame consumes
Sere leaf, so Love devoured him with her flame;
And like a storm-struck lily drooped his head
As lost love's desolation smote him dead
With an unlanguage'd sorrow! Cold and fair
He lay, fanned over by the pitying air,
As loving friends fan one who just has died,
Nor hear his rushing spirit upward glide,
Plumed and disprisoned from this mortal clay,
Out of earth's darkness, into endless day!
And over him to talk at evening came—
Crooning together in the twilight there—
Three moving effigies, Time, Death, and Care,
While secret gladness thrilled each grisly frame.
Then Death flung down a dart and journeyed on.
But Care and Time smiled when they saw the wan
Fair form, where Love, too late repentant prayed
In tearful silence. She but leaned and laid
On his mute lips a leaf of willow-blade:
“Sleep sweet,” she said, “More potent is my spell
Than Time, or Death! It was thy fate. Farewell!”

TO A CRAB.

O crab exuvius! what of thee can man
Excogitate, or find in Fancy's fields
Aught to the muse acceptable? for now
The dog-star rages, and at ninety-two
The mercury hangs, with not a drop of rain,
For nine or ten unwatered, weltering weeks!
In such a stress, if any muse can sing,
Of all the nine, I give it up, and take
My cool siesta, where the forenoon breeze
Creeps languidly along the Pequot beach.

But still thou comest, punctual to the time,
Cancer or crab—mine annual of the sea,
True to thy symbol in the Zodiac!

Amid the arid wastes of Africa,
Or in the Libyan desert's dewless sands,
The scorpion and the adder thrive in dust;
But thy more aqueous appetite requires
Sea-water, although shallow. When the time
Comes when the lean mosquito, seeking blood,
Marauds o'er midnight slumberers, and takes
From dreams divine, the culminating charm,
And when without the "*R*" as goodwives tell,

The festive oyster flavorless abides
In unmolested and forbidden beds,
And summer cholics cheer the hopeful quack,
Men look for thee. Dilapidated nets
Of last year's manufacture take anew
Indubious meshes, calculated well
To set at naught thy clashing mandibles,
And hold thee struggling and belligerent.

Then, when I hear the Bank street Gabriel
Solicitous, wind loud his sheet-iron horn,
Proclaiming to the lovers of good feed
That crabs have come, I can endorse his notes,
And honor them, although on "Groton Bank."

Some with a trident rude, or cruel prong
Impale thy adamantine coat of mail,
And thus impair the sport, like shooting trout.
The proper thing is to procure a net,
(And borrowed ones are oftentimes the best !)
And lift thee gently from the lucent tide,
With all thy armor still inviolate.

The truant school boy, wading in the cove,
When the salt tide is out, with cunning hand
Secures thee without danger. Greater, he,
Than all the Persian Shah can arrogate ;
That moslem potentate whose jewels rare
Out-rival all the cost and brilliancy
Of Koh-i-noor, never caught a crab !
How abject and how miserable he
Who lives in rural sections far removed
From ocean's brim, where shell-fish never come,

Save when in keg or canister entombed,
Exanimate and vapid ! How unlike
That gustatory and delicious dish,
Exhaling all the flavor of the wave,
That serves for picnic luncheons by the sea !

Most awkward of ungainly things that swim !
First cousin to that monstrous and disformed
Voracious, horrid hydra ! that men call
The lobster, when thy shell is young and soft,
I love thee well ! but when of later growth,
Though doomed to go to pot, where Moll, the
cook,
Like Hecate, by the bubbling cauldron stands,
And holding down the pot-lid with a spoon,
With fell intent, remorseless as a Fate,
Abbreviates thy existence—then I own
Thy case, O crab, must be considered hard !



BEFORE SUNRISE.

FROM her cloud chambers of the East,
Night—beautiful somnambulist !
Moves o'er the world, and sprinkles wide,
From fingers cool, on every side,
Dew and deep sleep. Moorland and farm,
And the brown hills are tranced in calm,
And the flushed orchard's heavy rows,
Are steeped in slumberous repose.

I cannot sleep. I rise and seek
The fragrant lanes. Against my cheek
The amorous airs their kisses blow ;
While thrilling all the dells below,
Within their world of foliage hid.
The ceaseless, grass-green katy-did,
And whipporwill with accent strong,
Rejoice in trysyllabic song.

Like some weird melody that streams
Down the dim corridor of dreams,
In murmurs to the listening skies,
The songs of rivulets arise ;
While farther on, the shining river
Winds round the hill with waves that quiver

Like some great serpent's glistening scales,
Drawn slowly through the reedy vales,
To where, with ceaseless thunder-flails,
The shore-assailing seas afar,
Wage with it a perpetual war.

The moonlight's soft suffusion laves
The waving wood in golden waves,
And tips the distant village spire,
Like an unchanging spark of fire,
And from adjacent barns, I hear
The sentinel-horn of chanticleer,
Proclaiming that the day is near.

Beyond the garden's ivied walls
A silver fountain leaps and falls,
Or lifted by the light wind shakes,
Breaks and re-forms, and breaks again,
In showers of pearls and diamond rain !

So beautiful is all, it seems
A picture from the world of dreams !
And yet for all, I know not why,
A sadness seems to haunt the sky—
An influence that the weary soul,
Endures, but yet cannot control ;
And musing lonely and apart,
The powers of sorrow touch my heart ;
The pale Past rising from the dead,
Waves her weird pinions o'er my head ;
Wild memories that long have lain
In haunted chambers of my brain,
Start up ! Dead hopes and shapes in tears,
Glare on me from the buried years !

Dark fancies! fading as the day
Floods the long East with rosy gray,
And o'er the mountains, distant, dun,
Abruptly the triumphant sun,
Hurls his long javelins of light that break
Against the silver target of the lake!



DICKENS.

Across the sea the sudden message came,
 "Dickens is dead!" and thrilled a nation's heart,
As all at once the splendor of his fame
 Illumed the world of Art!

From state to state, on wings of lightning flew
 The mournful tidings, till from shore to shore,
Each grave professor, as each schoolboy knew
 That Dickens was no more!

Nuns lisped it as at secret shrines they knelt :
 In saddened cities men with paces slow
Moved to their tasks, and Age and Childhood felt
 A brotherhood of woe.

But ah, not dead, though from our sight removed !
 A household friend, he lives and lingers still,
Enshrined in every heart with names beloved,
 The children of his will.

By Genius led, the phantom shapes arise,
 Of jovial Mirth, and Bigotry and Cant,
And heavenly Charity in lowly guise,
 And Penury and Want,

And dauntless Hope that looks beyond the grave,
And splendid misery and gilded vice,
And Folly's dupe, and Fashion's painted slave,
And Pride with heart of ice.

Nor yet forgotten be the glorious times
Of song and wassail, and of bounteous cheer,
Green merry Christmas, with its frosty chimes,
To mirth and memory dear !

Nor we alone ! but on from age to age,
Shall unborn thousands own the potent spell,
And laugh when Pickwick comes upon the stage,
Or weep for little Nell !

For them again shall Jingle play his part,
The Fat Boy sleep, or lone, lorn Gummidge grieve,
Or Heep conspire, or Bunsby con the chart,
And sage opinion give.

Full oft for them shall Lady Dedlock hear
A ghostly footstep when the winds arise ;
Or little Joe "move on" from year to year,
And Pecksniff moralize.

And many a time shall Tapley laugh at fate,
Or Scrooge at Marley's spectre stand aghast,
Or grand Micawber, impecunious wait
The luck that comes at last !

How oft in Pinch shall want and worth combine !
In Dombey, conscience light her secret hell !
How oft in Cuttle homely virtue shine ;
In Fagin, vice repel !

Oh ! great Magician in the world of thought !

Kind teacher, whom we shall not see again,
God grant that these, the lessons thou hast taught,
May not be all in vain !



LOTUS.

O wretched world, go by,
Grown gray in sin and shame!
At rest in the arms of Peace I lie,
Deaf to thy praise or blame.

Day unto trances sweet,
And the night to dreams sublime;
To these I yield the moments fleet,
The conqueror of Time!

I have found the lilies of love,
That by indolent rivers nod;
I have drunken the holy dews thereof,
Quaffed, and become as a god!

Against the tempest-blast
My barque shall strive no more;
Though shattered and rent, she drives at last
To wreck on a Fairy Shore!

MY OWL.

OF manners and tricks, as erratic
As ever a bird's may be,
Is the brown owl I keep in my attic,
As a quiet companion for me.

He perches all day on a rafter,
Staring down with his great round eyes ;
And excites my inordinate laughter,
He looks so important and wise !

I have watched him for whole hours together,
This dignified judge of a bird,
Fluttering never a feather,
Nor uttering ever a word.

But he sits there winking and blinking,
Nor an inch from his post will he stir
Until sunset ; most probably thinking
Of the jolly old days that were—

Of the Naugatuck woods, and the thicket,
Where the litle birds tasted so nice ;
When the world didn't seem half so wicked,
And barns were o'errunning with mice.

But at night, like the grimmest of sentries,
At the time of the flitting of bats,
He patrols through the garrets and entries,
And arrests all the vagabond rats.

It may seem to you lonely, but surely
Our life is of comfort the type ;
He munches his mutton demurely,
While I am enjoying my pipe.

Of love I have witnessed the folly,
And experienced the baseness of man :
The secret of life is—be jolly,
Read Dickens, and sleep when you can !

So, I say, let the world with its trouble
Drift on, for its cares we defy ;
From our garret it seems but a bubble,
To my little brown owl and I !



FERN FROM NIAGARA.

STRANGE is the influence that clings
To treasured tokens of the past,
And gives to most familiar things
Enchantments that shall hold us fast.

A splinter, any trifle small
From Shakespeare's house, has more, to-day,
Of deep suggestiveness than all
His best biographers can say.

With what devout idolatry,
What holy love, what tender care,
The mourning mother guards for aye
A tress of her dead darling's hair!

A maiden takes her jewel box
To while an idle hour away;
Or choose a bauble for her locks,
Humming the while some carol gay,

A ring, or faded violet—
Some lover's gift in earlier years—
Touches the spring of love's regret,
And softens all her soul to tears!

And thus, as on this simple leaf,
 This rainy night, I muse and pore,
I hear the thunder of the chief
 Of all the cataracts that roar !

I see the sheeted splendors glance,
 Bathed in the warm, prismatic light,
And foam-bows that dissolve or dance,
 Elf-Blondins, up and down the height !

What man may holier baptism boast,
 Though clothed in all the pomp of earth,
Than that affusion most august,
 That solemnized this nursling's birth,

Which, clinging to the fostering side
 Of that great wall, rejoiced and grew,
And trembled at the tumbling tide,
 Drenched in its glories and its dew ?

For this I hold the trifle dear,
 For this I ponder on it long,
And guard it safely, year by year,
 And weave its tendrils in my song.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

HERE, till the transient shower be overblown,
Let us drive in and let our horses rest,
Well worth the while ; a place of some renown,
Grand in decay, yet sombre and unblest.

See, what a lovely landscape it commands,
Half hidden in a clump of moaning pines,
Looking abroad upon the barren lands,
The wasted heritage of buried lines!

There lives no certain record of the fate—
The strange disaster that befel its lord,
Hurling him headlong from his high estate,
Remorseless, leaving neither heir nor ward.

The simple peasants hereabout maintain
The house is haunted ; that on certain nights,
At twelve o'clock, as one comes up the lane,
The chamber windows dance with doubtful lights

Here silence broods—the silence of the dead !
The lizard peeps from out the fissured walls,
As if to chide our loud intrusive tread,
That scares the bats from these deserted halls.

Neglected vines, the prey of rust and blight,
Swing snake-like from the fountain's broken rim,
While headless at his post a marble knight
Still guards the postern, motionless and grim.

Where once the steps of dancers, and the roar
Of bacchanal revel drowned the midnight bell,
And hearts beat happily that beat no more,
Gaunt Desolation weaves her silent spell !

The mullen lances pierce the rotten floors
To catch the sunshine glinting through the roof,
And swinging in the solitary doors,
The hermit spider spins his filmy woof.

How sadly sounds the hollow autumn breeze,
Like some revengeful ghost that cannot rest,
But whispers up and down the balconies
The dreadful burden of its anxious breast !

Did a rash hand, by sudden wrath made bold,
Slay the late guest and bring the wasting doom ?
Was it murder ? It may not be told,
Or tempted from its dark enfolding gloom.

How drear it looks ! Time and curse have done
A fateful mission ; wherefore, none may know.
But see ! the shower is past ; the setting sun
Sparkles upon the town to which we go.

THE NIGHT WATCH.

THE night is stormy and dark,
And the gale is piping free ;
The boding moon went out too soon,
Over the murky lee ;
The mad sea moans, the tempest groans,
And I rise from a haunted sleep,
With the wild unrest of a soul distressed,
For my darling is on the deep !

My lamp went out by itself,
Ere the midnight bell had beat ;
The spaniel whined to the moaning wind,
And crouched in fear at my feet ;
And as the blast flew shrieking past,
A voice seemed borne to me—
I thought it was my Willie dear,
A-sinking in the sea !

For the maiden moon she died too soon
From out the lurid lee ;
She hid her face in a veil of cloud,
From something she would not see !
Red-ringed and ashen-pale she was,
Like the spectral Lapland sun ;
She troubled my dreams with her fateful beams,
And I would that the night were done !

For all on a swift and angry flood,
I saw a fearful sight—
The wave-washed deck of a staggering wreck,
That drave athwart the night;
And red from its scabbard of cloud,
The rapier-lightning leapt,
The masts they cracked, and a cataract
Of waves o'er the vessel swept!

Oh, wild was the cry which the roaring blasts
Bore far o'er the midnight main,
For black with wrath on his ocean-path,
Death rode the hurricane!
And my soul recoiled aghast,
Till the vision passed away;
And all in tears from a couch of fears,
I woke to weep and pray!

O for the sound of a step I know,
And a voice that is dear to me!
But 'tis only the wind in the rattling blind,
Or an owl in the blasted tree!
Oh, God! is it never to cease—
The horror that mocks my grief—
The shuddering crash of the breakers that dash
Over the roaring reef?

Wearily clangs the clock that counts
The sad, slow steps of night,
And weary the last, long hour that brings
A glimmer of mournful light;

Till wrapt in a ragged shroud of fog,
The light-house looms like a ghost ;
And bald and gray, the early day
Breaks on the dismal coast.

Cometh the dawn with a dull, dead gleam,
For the crest of the blue cold wave,
And a cry of delight for the little beach bird,
But nothing for hope but a grave!
For there is that, nor penitent waves,
Nor weeping mists can hide—
The nameless thing that drifts and dips
With the swing of the heaving tide!



THE ADVENT OF THE MOSQUITO.

Again the gaunt mosquito comes,
Assassin of the night!
With all his starving family,
To put my dreams to flight,
And try and settle his small bill,
And take a draft at sight.

I hear again the dreadful sound,
That tells me who is near;
I hear him wind his horrid horn,
And whet his poisoned spear;
He sounds the battle blast, and ah!
I feel that he is here.

In vain the rank cigar I smoke,
Quite wild and desperate grown,
In vain I try to drive him out,
And shut the window down,
For still I hear those tranquil pipes,
Monotonously drone!

In vain with patent canopies
My restless couch I spread,
No sooner do I close my eyes,
And settle well in bed,
I feel a sort of faintness, like
A patient being bled.

THE MOSQUITO.

Like Cook among the Cannibals,
 'Tis useless to appeal,
Or like a mummy wind myself
 In sheets from head to heel;
The hungry wretch has picked me out,
 To make himself a meal.

His sucker, like a burglar's drill,
 Would pierce an iron door:
He loves, as Alexander did,
 To wade in human gore,
And like the Hoosac Tunnel, he's
 An everlasting bore!

You only put your finger down,
 To find he isn't there,
For now he's nibbling at your nose,
 Or dancing in the air,
Or doing something in your ear,
 Before you are aware.

A child is he of Jersey swamps,
 Where 'mid the fens and fosses,
He cultivates his dapper wings
 And nurtures his proboscis,
And promenades on slender stilts,
 Among the humid mosses.

But yet his faults may not suffice
 All merit to efface,
For sinner never yet was born,
 Without some spark of grace:
And he is a philanthropist—
 He loves the human race.

I've rubbed the room with camphor gum,
To modify the air ;
But still I hear his hateful hum,
About me everywhere,
And were I not a methodist,
I'd undertake to swear.

Oh ! bear me to some frozen clime
Where polar tempests blow !
On train-oil I could gaze unmoved,
Or Greenland's cliffs of snow,
And be content to pass my days,
Among the Esquimaux !

UNREST.

FROM a vision of fright,
I woke in the night,
And lay and listened long ;
But I only heard the crowing cock,
And the hollow stroke of the midnight clock,
And the sleepers breathing strong.

Whether it was the witching time,
Or something recently read
Of a horrible novelty of crime,
And the number of men found dead—
I shuddered, I shook at the the noise of a mouse,
And could not close my weary eyes,
But I seemed to hear the muffled cries
Of murder, in the house!

I drew the casement curtain aside,
And gazed on the midnight heaven—
On the myriad systems sprinkled wide,
And the sisterly Pleiades seven—
Luminous over the beautiful sea,
Looking like souls that were just forgiven,
And smilingly chiding me !
“Ah fool ! ah, weak of faith,” I said,
“The angels are watching thee overhead ;
And however men pass the day or night,
By the Merciful One all is ordered aright !”

THE BRIDAL.

I WATCHED the glad procession cross the green,
When lad and lass came tripping through the dells;
I heard the happy sound of minster bells,
And choral songs between.

Through the gothic-vaulted dome
The swelling organ rolled
Delightful modulations manifold,
Till all at once the children said, "They come!
Place flowers," they said,
"Upon her head,
With harebells from the dingle side,
And bridal roses crown the bride,
For fairer never yet was wed!"

Along the middle aisle they came,
He full of manly dignity—the pride
Of all the town, she moving by his side
With drooping eyelids meek,
Demurely, and a little flame
Of maiden bashfulness upon her cheek,—
Her heart beneath its snowy vest
Rocking the white rose on her breast,
So tenderly, so daintily,
That one could not but long to be
Rocked with it into rosy rest!

What time before the shrine they stood,
The nuptial music ceased,
All save a passionate, low interlude,
That tremblingly decreased,
To a soft whisper trickling down the keys,
Involving snatches of old melodies,
Until the vows were taken,
And the gray priest, with hands outstretched above,
Perpetual benediction supplicated,
On them the wedded, worthy mated,
Bold-hearted Youth, and everlasting Love :

Then with impetuous exultation shaken,
The organ chorals rose again sublime,
And all the deep bells swung in golden chime,
And jarred the air with joy's delicious madness !
Again the children shouted in new gladness,
"Twine flowers," they said,
"About her head,
With myrtle from the mountain side,
And double-blushing roses crown the bride.
For fairer never yet was wed !"

THE CLOSING SCENE.

I SAW again the long line cross the green,
While on the wandering airs forlornly fell
The measured monody of one slow bell,
With dirges doled between.

Like Autumn, when he grieves in leafless trees,
The solemn organ gave
Low elegies that wailed in minor keys,
And floated through the gloomy nave,
Like ghostly voices talking of the grave.

With sorrow in their thoughtful faces,
The village children from their places,
In kirtles clean came up in sober bands,
With sprigs and posies in their hands;
"Strew flowers," they said,
"Upon the dead,
With cypress from the lonely heather,
Wet with our tears;
Come join their loveliness to hers,
To make the darkness of the sepulchre,
Seem pleasant unto her!"

And wandering through each arch and aisle,
The saddened music all the while—
What time the service for the dead,
And solemn rituals were said,
 Seemed to grieve itself away,
 As a sad, uneasy breeze,
 That all the rough Atlantic day
Has wandered up and down and blown and blown
 And tired itself upon the lonely seas,
Dies into silence when the sun goes down.

Unnoticed in the corner where I stood,
And musing on the mournful obsequies,
"Alas! alas!" I said, "is this the end?
And must such melancholy scenes as these,
That rob us of the beautiful and good,
Forever on the ways of life attend?
Ay me! there is no loveliness," I thought,
"But what to some untimely end is brought;
Clouds hide the sun; sin bolts the gates of Heaven;
And soon or late the happiest heart is riven!
Even Nature only decks herself with flowers,
To show more ghastly in autumnal hours;
In vain to heaven our clasped hands we lift;
Driven by adverse winds we drift and drift
From ports of peace, like wretches lost at sea;
Hope thins away into a hollow wraith,
We fast, we pray, we wither and we die,
And nothing is immutable but death!"

But in my heart I seemed to hear
My angel whisper, fine and clear,
 The good, the beautiful, can never die!

One touch of Faith shall rend the tomb asunder,
As rocks are riven by the bolts of thunder.

Her's is the pass-word of the sky ;
Triumphant over Death she soars,
And at her touch the starry doors
Of Peace wide open fly !”

And then the choir began to sing,
“O Grave where is thy victory—thy victory?
O Death where is thy sting?”

And again the children said
“Come, come,
Sprinkle flowers upon the dead,
Heaven hath called an angel home !”

And blending in with rhythmic adorations,
And mellow thunder's ponderous palpitations,
Again the swelling organs blew !
In long reverberating undulations
The deep base rumbled, surged in seas of sound,
From stop to stop the phonic fury flew,
The treble trumpets trembled, and anew
Storms of triumphant music swept around !

And then a mellow flush of sunset bloom,
That bridged with beams of light the sacred gloom,
Through the deep enstained windows came,
Soft, warm and like a stream of golden mist,
That made the gothic gildings seem aflame,
And flushed with splendors an emblazoned Christ.

THE CROW.

CLAD in sacerdotal black,
Lean and hungry, as you sail
Heavy-winged along the vale—
Sable breast and ebon back,
Crow, you mind me with your croak,
Of Hamlet, in his inky cloak.

Bird ungracious, most fallacious
Is your aspect so sagacious!
Had you half the finer sense
Of the robin and the jay,
Your gaunt crew would hie away
At the first fall of the snow;
But then, being but a crow,
Beggared by your indolence,
You prefer to starve and stay,
Shivering through the winter time
Of our bleak, tempestuous clime,
And subsisting but by crime!

You're a thief!
That's your character in brief,
And 'tis proper that the county
On your black poll puts a bounty.

When the farmer sows his corn,
Him you watch at early morn,
But no sooner off he goes,
Singing homeward with his hoes,
Than your six ungainly toes
Ruin half his careful rows!
Vagabond, 'tis well the State,
Sets a price upon your pate:
If there's any thing I hate,
Worse than poison, I suppose
It is Crows!

Thief and coward! all your clan
Shun the very shape of man.
Swinging from some blasted limb,[?]
Effigy of Dandy Jim—
Straw-stuffed coat and battered hat,
Dangling boots and hemp cravat,
Puts your poltroon troop to flight,
With precipitate affright!

But when, wing-slant to the gale,
I observe you upward sail,
Then with envy, bandit bird,
Is my eager spirit stirred
To be with you as you fare
Through the azure fields of air,
Thus for one brief hour to know
How it seems to be a crow!
So with you I might descry,
From some tall pine lifting high
Its green plume, the fertile fields,
With their harvest loaded wains,

And the lakes whose silver shields
Catch the sunlight and the rains,
And the picturesque romance
Of the landscape's wide expanse !

Up there in the cloudless weather,
Laying our two heads together,
Would we look with high disdain
On the petty cares and pain
Of the weary-plodding swain,
Who in valleys far below
Reaps his heritage of woe—
Sowing sorrow, reaping rue,
Ah ! what more can mortal do ?

So with you for one brief day,
Would I bear myself away
From the weariness and care
To which mortal man is heir ;
Although, in a general way,
As I took the pains to say,
If within my cautious breast
Hatred ever builds her nest—
If there's aught that I detest
In the abstract—I suppose
It is Crows !

THE SUNSET CITY.

THERE'S a city that lies in the Kingdom of Clouds,
In the glorious country on high,
Which an azure and silvery curtain enshrouds,
To screen it from mortal eye;

A city of temples and turrets of gold,
That gleam by a sapphire sea,
Like jewels more splendid than earth may behold,
Or are dreamed of by you and by me.

And about it are highlands of amber that reach
Far away till they melt in the gloom;
And waters that hem an immaculate beach
With fringes of luminous foam.

Aerial bridges of pearl there are,
And belfries of marvelous shapes,
And lighthouses lit by the evening star,
That sparkle on violet capes;

And hanging gardens that far away
Enchantedly float aloof;
Rainbow pavilions in avenues gay,
And banners of glorious woof!

When the Summer sunset's crimsoning fires
Are aglow in the western sky,
The pilgrim discovers the domes and spires
Of this wonderful city on high ;

And gazing enrapt as the gathering shade,
Creeps over the twilight lea,
Sees palace and pinnacle totter and fade,
And sink in the sapphire sea ;

Till the vision loses by slow degrees
The magical splendor it wore ;
The silvery curtain is drawn, and he sees
The beautiful city no more !



CAPRICES.

I.—THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

THE skeleton Death came out of a tomb
To dance among the vaults;
And he grinned to himself at his goblin jigs,
And frantic somersaults.

But he gazed aghast at a figure of Faith,
With a finger pointing high;
And fled to his cell; but the statue still
As steadfastly points the sky!

II.—AFTER THE BALL.

When the heated dance is over,
With what fatigue and pain,
We pass to the waiting carriage,
That bears us home again!

So, when life's *Bal Masque* is ended,
And the dancers are out of breath,
We are led to a black-plumed carriage,
By the silent footman, Death!

BY AND BY.

WHEN the world is all forgot,
We shall rest us, you and I ;
The violet and forget-me-not
There shall bloom ; the butterfly
There shall sun his satin sails
In the dying summer gales,
And there hum the wandering bee
His fine noontide melody.

Far away the village bell
Oft shall thrill the throbbing air ;
But of bridal or of knell,
Little shall we dream or care ;
While at night the winds shall tell
Of the dead and how they fare ;
But we shall not hear their talk,
Or the ghosts that round us walk.

When the freezing streamlet grieves,
And the days are boisterous,
Shall the alders drop their leaves,
Like mute mourners over us ;
But we shall not wake or stir,
At the sighing of the fir,
Safe from winter's rude alarms,
Locked in one another's arms !

By and by, in a little time,
We shall cross our hands to rest,
Folded in a trance sublime,
By the streams that we love best,
And the far off world shall seem
Like a long-forgotten dream,
While the ages come and go,
Leaving us together, so.



TO A GRASSHOPPER.

TINY, pea-green harlequin !
What of wonder can describe
All your odd, gymnastic tribe,
To the kangaroo akin ?
Unless Darwin goes amiss,
With his queer hypothesis.

Vaulter of the summer grasses,
Skipping from whoever passes,
Or concluding no great harm meant,
Clinging, burr-like, to my garment,—
What of comedy surpasses
Yours ? Pray tell me what you mean,
Long elfin green,
By those antic evolutions,
Somersets and revolutions,
You indulge in all the while so,
Making serious people smile so ?
For what intent
You were meant, or sent,
Is a problem most abstruse.
Questionless, you have a use,
If the little powers of man,
All the mystery could scan,
Of the universal plan.

Chirping charmer, clover climber,
Insect athlete ! never stumbling,
In your ground and lofty tumbling,
Strange it is a thing so fragile
Should be so extremely agile !
When long summer dries the marshes
Your small gong a little harsh is ;
But you doubtless like it better
Then when fields are something wetter,
Rank with rain or damp with dew,
For like many a modern toper,
Summer-solstice interloper,
Water don't agree with you !
And like artists who sing louder,
Though perhaps a trifle prouder,
Your falsettos, with good reason,
Must be given in "The Season."

Sometimes, silent on a picket,
I have watched you sit an hour,
Till some melancholy cricket
Would his noonday song outpour,
Then you'd rub your parchment wings
With your fiddle-bows and things,—
Lantern jaws,
And legs like saws,
Till it seemed from such a clatter,
Something dreadful was the matter !
Over zealous, if not jealous,
In your drumming and your blowing,
Probably you thought your bellows
Might as well give out in showing
How to do a thing worth knowing !

Go it then, spasmodic leaper !
Seize your pleasure while you may ;
Blow your horn and have your day ;
When the primrose days are over,
And all dead are vines and clover,
That austere, remorseless reaper,
Time, will turn us all to hay !

When October,
Like a varlet,
Robs the woodland's summer dress ;
And the maple, blushing scarlet,
As the ruffian winds disrobe her,
Shrinks in timorous distress ;
When no longer leans the lily
By the mill-ponds mossy edge,
And an influence damp and chilly,
Blasts the rose and daffodilly,
And the vines along the ledge—
When the cricket
Leaves the thicket,
To creep under kitchen rugs,
Then, O mountebank of bugs !
Unique acrobatic vaulter,
Your frail powers will fail and falter ;
And some chill, autumnal morning,
Lying dying,
Without warning,
You will find it useless trying,
Leaping, creeping, singing, flying ;
With some early robin waiting
Cool and calm and aggravating,

Like some grim and hungry wizard,
Obviously deliberating,

When to pop you in his gizzard.
Farewell butterflies and clover,
Death is fate the wide world over !



THE WHITE LADY.

LAST night, while all the village slept,
She came—the Lady robed in white;
None heard as thro' the streets she swept,
Her footfall was so ghostly light.

She cast her mantle o'er the lands,
Like a pall for the lifeless earth below,
As she sifted from her elfin hands
The soft and feathery-flying snow.

The fox crept back into his lurch,
The stormy flakes so swiftly flew,
And the owl that shivered on his perch,
Heard her song as the night wind blew.

But the sleepers in the churchyard old
Could not hear her low refrain,
As she drew above them in the cold,
Her smooth and spotless counterpane.

The sad yews sighed as she hurried by,
And shook their phantom arms so bare;
And obelisks and headstones high
Stood like ghosts in the whitened air!

About the woodlands cold cascades
She works to build her magic halls,
And piles the roads with barricades—
White winrows or fantastic walls.

She whirls, she sweeps o'er moor and mere,
And dances down the shuddering air
In gusts that stiffen white with fear
The sighing hemlock's hoary hair !

On barren waste or windy hill,
Or deep in mountain-passes lone,
The wierd White Lady works her will,
And makes the frosty hours her own !



THE OLD CHURN.

IT stands within the corner yet,
That quaint, old fashioned churn ;
Ah me, those hours I ne'er forget,
When I was called to turn !
That well worn handle oft I seize,
In reveries of old-time,
When life seemed only bread-and-cheese,
And youth, in boyant prime,
Was all a rosy, radiant dream—
Bonny-clapper, here we are !
Buttermilk and cream !

And listening to that music now,
By younger hands evoked,
I seem to hear the lowing cow,
And stalwart steer, unyoked,
Come browsing home at fall of night,
Along the daised lane,
And thrilling with that old delight.
A farmer's boy again
Barefoot and jubilant I seem—
Honey-comb and clover-bloom,
Buttermilk and cream !

I smell, blown through the the open barn,
The fragrant aftermath ;
I hear the harsh, tin dinner horn,
That calls men from the swath,

Where, when the sun was zenith high,
The mowers in a row
Swept through the hip-high timothy
With faces all aglow;
And as if churning in a dream
Back to those days to pass I seem—
Bonny-clapper, dipper-dapper
Buttermilk and cream!

Now I am old! my scattered hair
Is white with sorrow's snow,
And dreams of what was bright and fair,
Are only left me now.
Oh, would that I could be once more
That guileless, happy boy!
But ah, my sighs can ne'er restore
That all too-fleeting joy,
When care was strange, and fun supreme,
Strawberry-shortcake,
Buttermilk and cream!

But yet for all, I will not be
A dotard to repine;
Love-light through all my past I see,
As sunlight glows through wine.
Bring me the churn, and let me seem
A glad boy as of old!
Let me renew that youthful dream—
Those vanished years of gold!
Ah me! it sings the old-time theme—
Bonny-clapper, dipper-dapper,
Buttermilk and cream!

A TIGER-LILY.

OF life my love a riddle makes,
All sweetness when I please her ;
A lily when the whim she takes,
A tiger when I tease her !

With kisses oft of shy surprise,
She smiles in fond love-languor ;
Sometimes with frowns and flashing eyes,
She looks superb in anger !

A checkered path of glooms and gleams,
Fate to our feet hath given ;
One half our life a jungle seems,
The rest, a little Heaven !

With words as sharp as claws she tears
My heart-strings all unheeding,
Then soothes me with her lily airs,
And music of her pleading.

O lily fair ! O tiger pet !
Whatever mood may hold you,
A double love must sway me yet,
And to my bosom fold you !

DECEMBER.

THE night is cold, the heavens are fair,
The barns are rich with ripened sheaves ;
And beggared orchards, brown and bare,
Are drifted with autumnal leaves.

With festive rounds of social mirth,
Within, the season we defy,
While on the broad, old fashioned hearth,
The seasoned hickory blazes high.

The tale is told, the poem read,
The double joke improved to death,
Till dew-eyed Pity droops her head,
Or broad-mouthed Laughter pants for breath !

Nor less his joy whose mood may choose,
Apart from all the social rout.
In quiet window nooks to muse
Upon the frozen world without.

How fair the frosty pastures lie !
And sparkling keen with early snows,
How grand against the dark blue sky,
The highlands lift their shaggy brows !

The fountain, frozen in the air,
Hath lost its pleasant, summer tune ;
And all its marble Tritons glare
Through icy visors, at the moon !

Swift as the eagle from the wood,
Far circling, swoops upon the fold,
The skater skims the solid flood,
Red-cheeked, and muffled from the cold.

Summer is dead upon the heath,
And folded in her winding-sheet,
And fitful gusts above her breathe
Æolian dirges, lorn and sweet ;

And ruder blasts responsive, moan
Through hollow dells and woodlands hoar,
Whose hoarse and ever changing tone,
Delights the ear of Fancy more.

For as a captive lark who hears
Her mates their matin-songs renew,
While she alone of countless choirs—
Imprisoned from her native blue,

Awakes the house with plaintive cries
Of longing, or assails the grate
With desperate wings, and vainly tries
To conquer her contentless fate—

So there are moments when the soul
Rustles her plumes and longs for flight,
And brooks with pain her brief control ;
And listening to those winds to-night,

I seem to mount and ride the gale,
With Boreas in his battle-car,
Through blinding snows and battering hail,
To realms beneath the Polar star ;

Where Winter, muffled to the eyes,
Doth watch his weird suns wax and wane,
And locked in ribs of eldest ice,
Maintains his lone, primeval reign.

Times go by turns : I will not mourn
In that it is not always May ;
But in the arms of Fancy borne,
Slide easily from day to day,

Watch Nature in her various state,
Fix wings of mirth to languid hours,
Stir up the fires of home, and wait
With large content, the birds and flowers ;

Nor envy him his darkened ways,
Who may not love the frost and snow,
Or in the hale December days,
To hear the wind's wild trumpets blow !

SEA VOICES.

By the amber light
Of the magic moon,
I sat by the Summer sea;
And listened long with a strange delight,
At night, in the leafy month of June,
To the mystic rune of its ceaseless tune,
And its marvellous melody!

And I fancied I heard as in a dream,
The wandering words of a singular theme—
The sound of a sad, subdued refrain,
Coming and going and coming again—
“Mortal trouble ceases never,
But I, the Sea, am the same forever.
I am the spirit of the sea:
Whoever the monarchs of earth may be,
They never can conquer me!
Tremendous Ocean's boundless plain
Is my supreme domain;
And proudly my foamy plumes are curled,
Throughout the Zones of the whirling world!”

O strange and rare,
Are my mansions fair,
Glittering palaces under the sea!
In might and majesty there I dwell,
Where the floors are paved with the red sea-shell,
Which the yellow-haired mermaids bring to me!

And I laugh to see their wild eyes glisten,
As they lean from their bowers,
Of green sea-flowers,
And swaying float on their sides to listen
To the stormy harmonies they love,
The plunge of the breakers far above!

Treasures untold,
Of the wrecks of argosies of old—
Wonderful pearls and coffers of gold,
With Indian gems from throne and shrine,
And opulent plunder of heathen wars,
In my coral avenues flash and shine,
And lighten the phosphorescent shades
Of my lengthened, emerald arcades,
With the deathless splendor of tinted stars!

Mine—all mine!
For what are the kings of earth to me?
I am the Spirit of the Sea!

Washing the shores
Of the green Azores,
Where the league-long surf forever roars;
Or where on Iceland's rocky walls,
My ponderous Titan-thunder falls;
Or where in indolent tropic calms,
I lave the feet of the holy palms,
Ebbing and flowing,
Coming and going,
I am the same! and hold through time,
My Empire, peerless and sublime!
Whoever, whatever the kings may be
Of the arrogant earth, I am the Sea!

"OLD PROBABILITIES."

HE wrestles with the weather : He divines
The things that shall be from the things that are ;
He knows the occultations and the signs
Of each prognostic star.

From the low murmur of the moonless seas
He learns their deepest secrets, and doth scan
The midnight heaven's moving mysteries,
To publish them to man.

The chariots of the Wind, whose wheels outrun
Centaurus, in his flashing course on high,
He stayeth with a sign. The flaming Sun
Winks to him from the sky !

His home is in the black domain of storm,
And in the dying sunset's gold alike :
He laugheth at the thunder, and his form
No lightning dares to strike !

So Fancy paints him. Others as a sage
Describe him— of a grave sagacious look,
Deciphering symbols from the antique page
Of some mysterious book.

Thermometers and barometric scales,
 Wind gauges, and machines of strange designs
 Surround him as he plans the tides and gales,
 And unto each assigns

Its area and its predetermined course,
 And scores it in a chart that we may learn
 Its natural law, duration, average force,
 And period of return.

But whether man or myth, he turns the mill
 That grinds the weather out from day to day;
 And when we cannot have it as we will,
 We bear it as we may.

Hemans declares "Leaves have their time to fall;"
 To which I add—and thieves their time to rob
 Henhouses, barns and banks: but thou hast all
 Times for thine own, Old Prob.!

Then go thy ways! old necromancer quaint,
 And flash thy prophecies from post to post;
 Enduring still our querulous complaint
 When thou dost vex us most:

For whether Winter's frost or Summers heat
 Freeze us or fry us, little heed to man
 Thou givest, following still in cycles meet,
 The old, eternal plan.

THE SILENT CITY.

WEARY of life, and sad at heart,
From the world's highway I roamed apart,
Through wood and wilderness, far away,
Till near the close of the dying day
I came to a shadowy rivers side—
And the wailing water was wild and wide—
Where a black-sailed shallop bore me across
To the Silent City of Thanatos.

And the avenues there were smooth and fair,
With many a wild-flowered plot and square,
But never a mortal footfall beats
Those dim arcades and desolate streets;
But the yews and cypresses moan by night,
And never the day-dawn brings delight,
And the streets untrodden are rank with moss,
In the Silent City of Thanatos.

Oh, a singular city it is to see,
As any that in the world may be !
And a strange community bide there in,
Unvexed by the mad world's fret and din ;
For they dream no more, or know, for aye,
The cares that wither, the hopes that die,
Nor touch of sorrow, nor pain of loss,
In the Silent City of Thanatos.

And the houses all are straight and low,
Where shoulder to shoulder sleep friend and foe,
And marvelous sculptures, white as snow,
Gleam in the moonlight, row on row,
And scored in the rock with curious care,
Are the records of those dumb dwellers there,
Inwrought with hieroglyph, scutcheon and boss,
In the Silent City of Thanatos.

And how long so e'er be the world-wide quest,
Here, only, the pilgrim findeth rest ;
For here the slumberer wakes no more,
Through earthquake-shock and thunder-roar ;
And the rest is sweet for the weary feet,
And over the hearts too tired to beat,
The still, meek hands are clasped across,
In the Silent City of Thanatos.

And the kings of the earth, though never so high,
With the vassal hither shall come and lie ;
And the warrior, glutted with half the world,
Here shall find his banners furled,
And his arrogant armies come to halt,
In the silent bivouac of the vault,
And pride and pomp be but as dross,
In the Silent City of Thanatos !

THE CLOSE OF THE SEASON.

BEAUTIFUL Summer is over,
Season of days elysian !
And the months of birds, and bees and clover,
Have passed like a lovely vision ;
And like swallows have flitted the revelers gay,
The careless, butterfly throng,
That filled the long, voluptuous day
With laughter and with song.

The banquet halls are forsaken,
And dead are the festal torches ;
And by the chill wind downward shaken,
The rose-leaves drift in the porches,
And gone are the waltzers like the wind,
With the weal or woe of each ;
And like a ghost that is left behind,
I haunt the lonely beach.

The fields are fading and dying,
The skies grow gray and sober ;
And through the rifled groves is sighing
The solemn and sere October.
Under the silent stars at night,
I walk, a beggar, alone ;
But the moonlit strand and the great delight
Of the sea, is all my own !

For me no stale romancing,
Under the gas-jets' glimmer ;
But to watch the rippled wavelets dancing
In the sunset's golden shimmer !
And the lonely sea-gull knows my form,
As I walk by the rolling wave,
And his jubilant scream from the flying storm,
Is the voice of a comrade brave !

Ah well ! it is quickly ended,
Flushed Fashion's hot campaign—
The brief, bright term of mockery splendid,
Of passion mixed with pain.
But "*Faites votre jeu messieurs !*"
I laugh, having been of the great ;
But to me the scene as a play appears,
And ye as the puppets of Fate !

Brief is the season of laughter,
What time Remorse is sleeping ;
But black-robed Sorrow cometh after,
Wan with over-weeping.
After the giddy whirl and strife,
Space for a soberer breath ;
After the masquerade of life,
Weariness, dirges, and death !

EULALIE.

BLUE birds linger here awhile,
O'er this sacred, grassy pile ;
Sing your sweetest songs to me,
'Tis the grave of Eulalie.

Streamlet, chanting at her feet,
Mournful music, sad and sweet,
Wake her not ! she dreams of me—
'Neath the yew-tree, Eulalie !

Roses white around her tomb,
Gently wave and sweetly bloom !
Let your silent language be—
"We will bloom for Eulalie !"

Eulalie, but yesternight
Came a spirit, veiled in white,
I knew it could be none but thee,
Bride of Death, lost Eulalie !

Kiss me, Eulalie ! once more,
Ere thou seek'st the starry shore ;
Say thou know'st I sigh for thee,
Where thou liest, Eulalie !

Angels guard her with your wings !
Shield her from unholy things !
Bid her dream love-dreams of me,
'Neath the yew-tree, Eulalie !

FOG.

THERE is rain in the east, and the heavy crow
Along the pasture flyeth low ;
While over the moorland's world of bog,
Silently floats the phantom fog.

Whether day or night, it is hard to tell,
And the dull farms drowse in the doubtful spell,
And my sad thoughts mixed with shadows gray,
Rise not with the vague, half-dormant day.

Vaporous fringes, silver-white,
Trail to the vanishing skirts of night,
And up and along the mountain side,
Ghost-white, the giant shadows glide.

So oft through memory's twilight shade,
Wraiths of the dead years flit and fade,
Which never again on earth are caught,
But haunt forever the streams of thought.

Mist monsters they ! unreal and vast,
That brood o'er the wrecks of a ruined past—
Dream-genii, born of a troubled mind,
That rise with the sunset to walk with the wind !

I stand where the river eddies whirl
In many a swift and glassy curl,
Where the weeping willows ceaselessly drip,
And the bubbles break on the lily's lip.

What makes the alders shiver so,
As they lean o'er the treacherous pools below?
Do the reeds as they whisper together there,
Guess at the secret of my despair?

Yet well I know these clouds but hide
The visions that glow on the other side;
And the quenchless lamps of love still glow,
In the sad heart's deepest crypts of woe.

For a face looks in through the cloudy rifts,
As the spectral scenery slides and shifts,
And a whisper comes, in a tone divine—
The fog must melt, and the sun shall shine!

Patience! the world in which we seem,
Is only a swiftly changing dream;
A brief mirage of mists and tears,
Resolved by the light of happier years!

RUE.

I AM sad to-night, and the autumn rains
Stream from my storm-swept window panes,
Like the unconquerable tears
Of Grief, remembering happier years !
And yet what is it, O sighing Soul—
This sorrow thou canst not control ?

My night-lamp fainter and fainter grows,
Like the dying heart that seeks repose
Only in death—that slumber deep—
That last, long, visionless, perfect sleep,
Where, when the lamp of hope expires,
Sink with it all our wild desires.

For I muse in a chamber quaint and old,
Of a presence it never may hold,
Of her sun-sheen hair of rippled gold,
And a carven marble so white and cold,
Out there in the rain ; but alas, in vain
Love longs for the vision back again !

And about the antique, ebony bed,
The tapestries stir like robes of the dead ;
For a ghostly breeze creeps over the floor,
Like the sighs of those who have gone before—
The sweet, white Souls whose footsteps rove
The asphodel fields of the Land of Love.

For I remember the marble lips,
And the meek eyes closed in death's eclipse,
Of a maiden whose sister roses wept
Their dew for her as she coldly slept—
The roses and rueful rue they spread,
Dying with her, on that silken bed ! .

And the lustrous lilies that shone less fair,
Than the radiance rare of her hyacinth hair,
And the bridal-daisies, not half so meek
As her alabaster-blanchéd cheek,
As she lay in the chastened and sober gloom,
Of that hemlock-odorous, silent room.

And thus it is, O desolate rain !
I am tortured by thorns of a nameless pain,
As you bring on your dismal, demon-wings,
Heart-breaking thoughts of happier things—
And maddening memories that tear
My heart with agonies of despair !

And thus my spirit is sad to-night,
And blurred with the clouds of undelight,
When I think of the dear, dead lost who sleep,
Under the green grave-grasses deep ;
And I long to add to the church-yard row,
The tablet of one who sleeps below.

THE BACHELOR.

[AFTER ALDRICH.]

WHEN winds blow cold,
O'er the desolate wold,
And the spendthrift maple squanders its gold ;
And over the meadow so sober and seared,
October comes up with a frost on his beard ;
Then a curious fancy comes into my head,
And I say to myself, "It were better to wed :
For the summer of life will be speedily past,
But the love of a woman abides to the last ;"
For a ghost of the future perplexes my mind,
And I shudder to hear the winter wind,
And a Bachelor's life is folly, I wot,
And I am to aweary to marry !

But when pastures are new,
And the heavens are true,
And the violet opens her wimple of blue,
And the sunshine is warm in the long forest aisles,
And the peach-orchards sweeten the highway for
miles,—
Then a different fancy possesses my head,
And I smile that I ever should think I could wed !
For thoughts of the future to fortune I cast,
As I lounge in the daises and dream of the past ;
For the spring-time returneth so constant and kind,
But maids are fickle as summer wind,
And a Bachelor's life is jolly, I wot,
And I am too merry to marry !

YOU AND I.

When you and I are asleep, my love,
Under the carven stone ;
Who will there be left to weep, my love,
Of all that we have known ?
But the lark will sing as clear and free,
As she springs from her nest by the alder-tree,
And the robin carol his hearts desire,
Above us in the red-rose brier.

Though your voice is low and weak, my dear,
There is love-light in your eye !
Though the roses fade from your cheek, my dear,
Love's roses never die !
Buts it's oh, for the long and lasting sleep,
Where the wild-wood honeysuckles creep !
Under the violets to lie,
And let the weary world go by.

WINTER MIDNIGHT.

[MINNESOTA, 1873.]

THE new moon floats like a silver canoe,
In the clear Dakotah sky ;
And the large stars look from the boundless blue.
With a mystic brilliancy !

Over the prairie for leagues is spread
December's immaculate snow,
Like a white shroud smoothed above the dead,
For the earth is dead below !

And the crimson auroras flicker and gleam,
Like demoniac banners unfurled
In the Hell of a frenzied poet's dream—
Or the flames of a burning world !

From the freezing lakes I can hear the sound
Of the ice as it cracks and roars ;
And the distant bay of the famished hound,
Afar on the desolate moors.

But in vain for me the red North shakes
His battle-banners on high ;
Or like golden bridges, o'er streams and lakes,
The shafts of the moonlight lie.

There is beauty below, there is splendor above,
But ah, they are nothing to me !
For my heart is afar with the friends I love,
By the shore of the Eastern sea !

ULTIMA THULE.

I HAD a vision when the moon was high.
And blind old Midnight, like a banished god,
Who strives to find some route, however hard,
So it be sure, back to that former state,
Where once he shone, clomb with assiduous feet,
Picking his devious, disconsolate way,
Up a sad segment of the oblique sky.
I seemed to roam in an enchanted Isle,
Benighted, un conjectured and remote,
Tormented round by gray, tempestuous seas,
Dim, perilous, where vessel never sailed,
Lying beyond the confines of the world.
It was a fallen realm of landscapes wild,
Of dreary lakes, plateaus and terraces,
And rock-ridged promontories, worn by storms—
Tortured by earthquake and by avalanche,
Into the semblance of fantastic towers,
And ruinous battlements, that seemed the homes
Of those unearthly shapes, the reeling brain
Conceives in lunacy, of Phantom-Land.
And there is neither rest nor anything
That gives the heart of man to taste of peace :
But perturbation weird and dire disturbance,
Dismal disaster, discord and despair,
A drear domain of discontent and death !

I stood upon a toppling pinnacle—
A black, balsaltic, overhanging crag,
That trembled to the thunderous vibration
Of headlong sea-shocks dashed against its base,
With jar tremendous as when mighty Thor
Brings down his hammer, and the ice-bergs crack
In scintillating ruin round the Pole.
On such a beetling precipice I stood,
And gazed upon that witchland scenery.
Gigantic forests rent by hurricanes,
Tossing their gaunt, gesticulating arms,
Like mournful skeletons to the pitiless heavens,
Made awful noises and a crashing sound.
Forever, in that ancient solitude.
Along the cavernous gorges and ravines,
Where the winds wandered, blowing hollow tunes,
A frantic river raved and whirled in foam,
And moaning swayed in multitudinous murmurs,
And an impetuous sweep from side to side,
And shuddered as it threw itself at length,
Into the chasmal hollows of the earth,
Making a dismal music to the moon—
The moon herself, that looked so wearied out,
And seemed so old, dejected and decayed,
As she would drop from out the marble sky,
And quench her faded, insufficient light,
In blind oblivion, and to rise no more !

An arrows flight from off the looming shore,
A whirlpool jagged with iron-headed rocks,
Black, threatening, and implacable as fate,
Rotated horribly and gurgled hoarse,

Like some enormous water-beast who shows
His hungry-fatal teeth, and froths for food.
And still with wide dilated eyes I gazed
In fearful wonder for new scenes to come—
Confusion's climax ! Darkness hid the moon.
In the torn edges of the inky clouds
Incessant lightning played, and all at once
Volleys of thunder broke athwart the skies,
Explosive, solid rumbling, as if were fallen
The adamantine parapets of Heaven,
Toppled to chaos ; and the granite cliffs
Reeled to their rock foundations oscillant,
And Echo startled from her hundred caves,
Ran shrieking through long gorges to the sea.
Great whirlwinds blew ; yet statute-like I stood,
As one who walks in dreams nor apprehends
Eternal danger, while his soul is rapt
In vague phantasmagorias, half asleep.

Then seemed it that the unquenchable stars went mad !
Some shot to outer darkness and expired ;
And some exploding into comets broke,
And rushing in far coruscation, streamed
Through startled constellations infinite,
In orbits incomputable by man.
And while I gazed with faculties entranced
The burning mountain shook itself and yawned—
Disparting wide, deluging night with fire,
And casting far across the seething sea
Red leagues of splendor. Then the forests crashed,
And white with foam the roaring vortex spun,
Drowning the rocks.

The rest is mystery :
For the wild trouble of the elements,
Touched my dazed brain with horror and I woke,
As morning drave her ruby-flashing wheels
Along the dappled and impearléd East ;
And from the dewy fields upsprang the lark,
Thrilling the sunshine with his ecstasy !



AN AUTUMN FLOWER.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

SOLITARY, dying flower,
Once the fairest of the vale,
Cometh now the frosty hour,
That gives thy petals to the gale.

So like thee must man decay,
When the winds of death shall blow ;
As thy leaflets drop away,
One by one our pleasures go.

Time steals from us, day by day,
Joys that gladdest, dearest seem ;
Every hour that flies away,
Robs us of some darling dream.

Rosy visions, hopes most dear,
Youth's illusions fond and fair.
Fade and fail and disappear,
Like thy fragrance, turned to air !

Until man by trouble tossed,
Waiting death's autumnal hour,
Sadly asks in reverie lost,
Which is frailest, life or flower ?

THE ANGEL FERRY.

OH, when shall the boatman ferry me o'er
To the friends who wait on the farther shore?
Along a wild and a toilsome way,
I have journeyed for many a weary day,
Over the graves of early hope,
And up misfortune's thorny slope,
Till my mortal sun hath past its noon,
And my heart beats time to a ceaseless tune:—
When shall the boatman ferry me o'er
To the friends who wait on the farther shore?

Through the wrecks of many a fairy dream,
I come to the banks of the mystic stream:
I have waited so long for a tardy sail,
I can feel my strength begin to fail;
And while I faintly call and pray,
My wind-swept locks are turning gray.
But I know he is true, and will come ere quite
My deepening day shall sink to night,
And I walk the sands till he bear me o'er
To the friends who wait on the farther shore.

He is fair and beautiful, I know,
And his shining robe is white as snow,
And the tender love of his starry eyes
Is caught from the glory of other skies.

And his silver-sandalled feet have trod
The banks of the crystalline rivers of God!
O boatman, haste from the Land of Rest,
And pillow my head upon thy breast!
Speed thy swift shallop, and bear me o'er
To the friends who wait on the farther shore!

The shadows deepen, one by one,
The sun is set, the day is done,
And like a star on my growing sight,
I can see at last the signal light.
High over the rocking wave it rides,
And swiftly toward the margin glides,
I can hear the rush of that spirit barque,
And mellow splendors pierce the dark!
Adieu, dim world! ere I'm wafted o'er
To the friends who wait on the farther shore.



THE SKATER.

SWIFT as a swallow's airy sweep,
 I skim the gelid, crystal deep.
 More fleet my well-adjusted steel,
 Than nimble Mercury's wingéd heel !

To right and left my pathway swerves,
 In flashing arcs and cunning curves,
 Or backward urged the runner sings,
 In lengthened loops and whitened rings.

Strike out ! strike out ! I hear the shout
 Of mad pursuit and merry rout !
 But swift is he who follows me,
 Before the wind, point-blank and free !

With main and might I urge my flight,
 My pulses tingling with delight ;
 The wind's keen kisses smite like fire,
 My bare cheeks, flushed with glad desire !

Oh tell me not the joys they feel,
 Who float or whirl through waltz or reel ;
 Or guide the steed, or trim the sail,
 Close-hauled before the freshening gale ;

But give to me the skater's art,
 That thrills the nerves and warms the heart ;
 Such joy 'tis his alone to feel,
 Who rides, sure shod, the sounding steel !

SONNETS.

HAUNTED.

OFF in the hollow silence of the night
 There comes a tapping at my window pane—
 A low, dead sound that chills me with affright,
 And ere I sleep I hear it twice again.
 You tell me 'tis the sweeping of the rain
 Against the gable, or the phantom wind,
 Whistling a dead march to the shuddering blind,
 Rats in the casement, or the creaking vane.
 Unreasonable reasons all ! I find
 In them no solace for a tortured mind !
 Come to my room. Ay, me ! you hear it now !
 This is no wind to shake a crazy bough,
 But some poor ghost whose troubled bosom holds
 Some dreadful secret of these lonely wolds !

ABSENCE.

SLOW move the hours, my love, when far from thee !
 The wings of Morn are heavy, and the night
 With mocking dreams but tantalizes me,
 And cheateth Grief with counterfeit delight.
 Lo ! as a pilgrim watcheth from a height
 The breaking East that shall disclose his way,
 I lift mine eyes to thee for strength and light,
 Nor trust a lesser splendor than the day !
 How long, how long, beloved, shall I pray ?
 How long afflict with sighs the listening dark,
 Or walk with Doubt in devious paths astray ?
 For like the dove, black-flying to the ark,
 I find in all the Earth no place to rest,
 Unless imparadised upon thy faithful breast !

TO L.

To THEE, dear friend, how many leagues away—
 Beyond what fields of space, what breadths of sea!
 Kept from our fireside circle long,—to thee
 We fill the Christmas cup and drink to-day.
 Whether in Tropic Isles thy feet may stray,
 Pursuing Pleasure thro' her gay domain,
 Till friends and Home and kindred o'er the main
 No more the spells of Memory obey—
 Or lying becalmed upon the burnished plain
 Of Ocean vast, thou visitest again
 In homesick dreams the Land that gave thee birth;
 God keep thee ever in His watch and ward!
 And let our prayers, like an Angelic guard,
 Companion thee, beloved, through the Earth.

EBB AND FLOW.

LIFE's moods are equilibriate. All things lead
 Toward the opposites. Day tends to night,
 As darkness heralds on the morn's delight,
 Each following each, though both by turns precede.
 And so when I am sad full well I know,
 Like some brave soul that conquers mortal pain,
 My better star will rise betimes again,
 Gilding the darkness with its tranquil glow.
 Likewise my joys I temperately hold,
 Nor yield my soul to treacherous extacies,
 For though my sail seems blown o'er halcyon seas,
 With rims of roses, to be over bold,
 May prove too late the fatal scorn of care,
 And dash me on the reefs of sharp despair!

ABELARD.

HENCEFORTH my path is starless. Oh, that Time,
 Like some malign magician, had not wove
 His fatal discords in the lyre of love,
 Making it seem a harsh and broken rhyme,
 Marring the music of a dream sublime !
 Abject and old, and obsolete, too late
 I see the shade of a remorseless Fate
 That hunts me to my grave. I gaze aghast,
 Down the dread vista of my ruined past ;
 And seem a wrecked man on some desert shore,
 Who sees far ships, one after one go by,
 Till through a rain of tears he sees no more,
 Yet sits and hears, in weary misery,
 On the lone beach, the sullen billow roar.

HELOISE.

Who was it that said Abelard? I heard
 Methought, his whispered name. Oh woeful me—
 Sad sisters let it henceforth ever be,
 A sacred, incommunicable word !
 He sleeps in a Paraclete. He is not dead ;
 Upon my breast still rests his darling head,
 In dear remembered visions, all night long.
 Ay me, this loveless world is full of wrong,
 And I am tired. These cloistered solitudes
 Change not my soul ! On Abelard it broods !
 Still say you, dead ? Ah, then it were not well
 Much longer to remain. He is my own,
 And I will find him—yea, although alone
 My wanderings lead me down the slopes of Hell !

COLUMBUS. 1492.

I AM not wrong. Fixed is my steadfast soul,
 Some strong, resistless passion draws me on,
 Till the huge purpose of my life be won,
 And I attain that far, prophetic goal.
 Attempted not before me. It may be
 Madness or inspiration—God knows best !
 Yet something far o'er an unventured sea,
 By the wide gateways of the golden West,
 Lures me with dreams, vast as a Continent,
 Which ever urge their high accomplishment,
 From which my spirit nothing shall affright ;
 For I will yet plant, o'er an unknown main,
 Upon new shores, the red flag of old Spain,
 Nor leave the world to ignorance and night.

THE SAME. 1499.

PROUDLY to spread thy fair, august demesne.
 I took thy royal beauty. On my knees
 I blest thee, Isabel, Castillian queen,
 And gave thee back a world! but could not please
 Thy proud and jealous courtiers; yet these chains
 That load my wrists shall not dishonor me;
 To History the iron truth remains !
 I die in Valadolia, if so be
 It comes, at last, to this, and I must die;
 Still did I hope my weary dust might lie
 In one of those glad Isles my memory loves,
 Bosomed in flowers undying ever more—
 Sea-girt, amid the deep impleachéd groves,
 And violet airs of bright San Salvador !

CAPTIVE.

CROWNED with a golden opulence of hair,
 I see thee yet, as when, that night in June,
 The lambent glory of the ample moon,
 Touching thy forehead, made thee saintly-fair !
 Would I could alway so remember thee,
 O Sorceress of sorrow ! and forget
 Thy smooth fictitious vows when first we met—
 Thy words more faithless than the changeful sea !
 Would I could exorcise thee, nor retain
 Thy memory, made immortal by its pain !
 The magnetism of thy violet eyes,
 So held me by their facinating spell,
 I dreamed not thou hadst slipt from dismal hell—
 A dulcet devil in a saint's disguise !

THE HARPIST.

I WATCHED him as along the street he went,
 Most wearily, in garments thin and poor,
 Pausing at intervals by porch and door
 To play upon his well worn instrument—
 An antique harp, o'er which his head was bent,
 While the swift strings his meagre hands swept o'er.
 And, as he played, such marvelous sweet strains
 His fingers caught from those obedient chords—
 Such throbbing cadences and wild refrains,
 The soulful music had no need of words !
 Tears filled his eyes ! In those familiar themes,
 He heard once more the birds and murmuring streams
 Of home, and sighing of his native pines,
 In wind-swept gorges of the Appenines !

COAST SCENE IN AUGUST.

THE morning mist hugs close the brackish shore,
 And lies upon the still sea like a shroud.
 O'er the wide waste no object seems endowed
 With life or motion, save the languid oar
 Of some lone fisher whose dejected sail
 Droops idly, waiting for the lingering gale,
 That still defers its coming day by day,
 Till e'en the sea seems wretched with delay,
 Having most human moods. It sleeps amain :
 But when once more along these iron rocks
 The loud, resistless North shall sound again
 The hoarse storm-trumpets of the equinox,
 It shall awake from out its weltering sleep,
 With giant throes, and thunders of the deep !

AN EOLIAN HARP.

A SPIRIT lurks within this wooden shell,
 Whose name is Music ; and these silver strings
 Seem the fine bars that shut him in his cell,
 Wherein the tuneful captive sighs and sings.
 He is the lover of the Wind, and when
 Her breath awakes him on soft summer nights,
 He answers her with melody ; ah then,
 He thrills—he faints with rapturous delights,
 Or sighing breathes along the murmuring wire,
 The languors of unsatisfied desire !
 Thus Fancy holds my mystic harp still dear,
 Kissed by the warm South, sweet with wood and dale,
 Or when across its bosom swept I hear
 The shrill arpeggios of the rising gale !

A FLUTE AT NIGHT.

'Tis not the mocking bird, whose curious note
 Makes ever vocal the Floridian dark
 With overplus of song ; her tawny throat
 Pours not such soulful strains. Yet hark, O hark !
 How once again, along the enchanted air,
 The music seems to wing its way to Heaven,
 Like some strong soul triumphant o'er despair !
 Anon, it sighs, like one by memory driven
 To wretchedness, and finds not anywhere
 The peace that comes not to the unforgiven.
 No bird it is, but some lorn lover's flute,
 Speaking a bashful passion, elsewhere mute—
 With sweet translation of his changeful mood,
 Who breathes his soul into the hollow wood.

REMINISCENCE.

It was a Turk in Tunis that I met,
 Cross-legged upon a saffron-colored mat,
 Silent and imperturbable he sat ;
 And like a nightmare I behold him yet—
 Bronzed as a pagan god, smoke brown and dry
 As parchment ; yet his introspective eye,
 Full of gray meditation on the themes
 The world wots not of, seemed to gaze on dreams.
 Through many terrors I have passed since then—
 Wounded in battles, wrecked in midnight seas,
 Wasted by famine among savages,
 Grazing the grave in many ways ; but when
 I think of that old Turk there at his ease,
 It seems as if all this had never been !

GOING HOME.

WHEN the end comes, and like a tired child,
I fall beside the long highway of Time,
Nor strive the last, rough, upward range to climb—
O Father, hold me not unreconciled !
Let me not then remember all the wild
And thorny ways through which my wounded feet
So long have toiled ; but rather what beguiled
My way of pain, and made it oftentimes sweet
With laughter of glad streams, and pastures green,
And fragrant forest pathways opening wide
On dewy meadows sparkling in the sun,
Like gleams of Paradise in dreams foreseen !—
So shall my slumber be unterrified,
And my awaking find the journey done.



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